

KENYATTA UNIVERSITY  
FACULTY OF EDUCATION  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS

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**Professional Qualities of Teachers  
in Early Childhood Education:  
a Comparative Study of Nairobi Pre-school Institutions  
by Sponsorship**

By

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Thesis Submitted in Part Fulfillment for the Degree of Master of Education, Kenyatta University

MAY 1996

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Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my original work and it has not been submitted for a degree in any other University.

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(Supervisor)

## Dedication

To my late brother, Joseph Tom Mboya (1971 - 1988)

Though young, you knew what it meant  
to work hard, to share and to forgive.  
For the love and respect you had in  
your heart, this work is solemnly  
dedicated to you.

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## CHAPTER ONE BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1	Introduction
1.2	Background to the Problem
1.3	Statement of the Problem
1.4	Objectives
1.5	Significance of the Study
1.6	Scope and Limitations of the Study
1.7	Conceptual Framework
1.8	Operational Definitions
1.9	Summary

## Table of Contents

TITLE	PAGE
2.0 Introduction	14
2.1 Early Childhood Education and the Role of Teachers	i
Declaration	ii
Dedication	iii
2.1.1 Early Educators	iii
Acknowledgements	iii
2.1.2 Early Childhood Education in the Context of African Indigenous Education	v
Table of contents	v
List of Abbreviations	xii
2.2 Quality of Pre-School Teachers and Performance	xiii
2.3 Methods of Teaching in Pre-School Institutions	25
	<b>CHAPTER ONE</b>
	<b>BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY</b>
2.4 Impact of Pre-School Intervention	28
1.0 Introduction	1
2.5 Summary	22
1.1 Background to the Problem	1
Footnotes	23
1.2 Statement of the Problem	5
1.3 Objectives	5
1.4 Significance of the Study	5
1.5 Scope and Limitations of the Study	6
2.6 Introduction	6
1.6 Conceptual Framework	6
3.1 The Research Method	11
1.7 Operational Definitions	11
3.2 Area of Study	12
1.8 Summary	12
3.3 The Study Approach	30

### CHAPTER ONE

#### BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

### CHAPTER THREE

#### RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.4	Footnotes	13
<b>CHAPTER TWO</b>		
<b>REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE</b>		
3.4.1	Institutions	
3.4.2	Respondents	
2.0	Introduction	14
3.5	Research Instruments	
2.1	Early Childhood Education and the Role of Teachers	14
3.5.1		
2.1.1	Early Educators	14
2.1.2	Early Childhood Education in the Context of African Indigenous Education	19
3.5.4	Analysis	
2.2	Quality of Pre-School Teachers and Performance	21
3.7	Data Analysis	
2.3	Methods of Teaching in Pre-School Institutions	25
3.8		
2.4	Impact of Pre-School Intervention	29
2.5	Summary	32
	Footnotes	33

### CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.0	Introduction	36
3.1	The Comparative Method	37
3.2	Area of Study	38
3.3	The Study Approach	39

3.4	Sampling Procedures	40
3.4.1	Institutions	40
3.4.2	Respondents	41
3.5	Research Instruments	41
3.5.1	Questionnaires	42
3.5.2	Interviews	42
3.5.3	Observation Checklist	43
3.5.4	Document Analysis	44
3.6	Piloting of Instruments	45
3.7	Data Analysis	46
3.8	Summary	46
4.4.2	Footnotes	47
4.4.3	Conditions and Terms of Service for Pre-School Teachers	47
4.6	Summary	48
	Footnotes	48

**CHAPTER FOUR**

**DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

4.0	Introduction	48
4.1	Background Information of Teachers	49
4.1.1	Age	49
4.1.2	Gender	50
5.1.2	Teaching Methods employed in the four	

		viii
4.1.3	Marital Status	52
4.2	Teachers' Academic and Professional Qualifications and Experience	52
4.2.1	Teachers' Academic Qualifications	53
4.2.2	Teachers' Professional Qualification	54
4.2.3	Teachers' Working Experience	61
4.3	Teaching Methods	66
4.3.1	Teaching Methods as used by the four categories of Pre-School Institutions	67
4.4	The Quality of Pre-School Institutions and Teachers' Conditions and Terms of Service	77
4.4.1	Status of Physical facilities in the Pre-School Institutions	78
4.4.2	Status of Teaching-Learning Materials in the Pre-Schools	86
4.4.3	Conditions and Terms of Service for Pre-School Teachers	91
4.5	Summary	98
	Footnotes	100

**CHAPTER FIVE  
CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

5.0	Introduction	101
5.1	Summary of Findings and Conclusions	102
5.1.1	Academic and Professional Qualifications of Pre-School Teachers	102
5.1.2	Teaching Methods employed in the four	

	Categories of Pre-School Institutions	105
5.1.3	Quality of Pre-School Institutions and Teachers' Conditions and Terms of Service for Pre-School Teachers	106
5.1.4	Conclusions	108
5.1.5	Policy Recommendations	112
5.1.6	Suggestions for Further Research	113
5.2	Summary	114
4.2	Bibliography	116
4.3	Appendices	121
4.4	Teachers' Level of Education	53
4.5	Teachers' Responses on whether or not they had any professional training	54
4.6	Teachers' duration of training (by category)	56
4.7	Reasons why Training is important	57
4.8	Experience of Teachers in Pre-School Institutions by Category	60
4.9	The Number of years Teachers have taught in the same Institution	64
4.10	Responses for Teachers on Whether or not they had attended Seminars	65
4.11	Themes of Seminars/Workshops according to Teachers	67
4.12	Teaching methods used by Teachers in the Pre-Schools (by category)	68
4.13	Reasons why Teachers used the	

## LIST OF SCHEMAS

4.14	Reasons why Teachers used the	
1.1	Stages of Development and Training Needs for Pre-School Teachers	8
4.15	Reasons why Teachers felt Montessori	
1.2	The Conceptual Framework	10
4.16	Differences between the Activity and	
	the Montessori methods	

## LIST OF TABLES

4.1	Age of Respondents by Category	50
4.2	Gender of Teachers in the Pre-Schools by Category	51
4.3	Marital Status of Teachers in the Pre-Schools by Category	52
4.4	Teachers' Level of Education	53
4.5	Teachers' Responses on whether or not they had any professional training	54
4.20	materials in the Pre-Schools by category	55
4.6	Teachers' duration of training (by category)	55
4.21	Adequacy of the important teaching	
4.7	Reasons why Training is important	57
4.8	Experience of Teachers in Pre-School Institutions by Category	63
4.22	headteachers	
4.9	The Number of years Teachers have taught in the same Institution	64
4.10	Responses for Teachers on Whether or not they had attended Seminars	65
4.24	by category	
4.11	Themes of Seminars/Workshops according to Teachers	66
4.12	Teaching methods used by Teachers in the Pre-Schools (by category)	68
4.13	Reasons why Teachers used the	

	Activity/Ministry Method	69
4.14	Reasons why Teachers used the Montessori method	70
4.15	Reasons why Teachers felt Montessori was not a good method	74
4.16	Differences between the Activity and the Montessori methods	76
4.17	Teachers' responses on the Status of Physical Facilities in the Pre-Schools by Category	79
4.18	Status of Play Facilities (by category)	82
4.19	Number of Children in a class (by category)	84
4.20	Status of the Teaching-Learning materials in the Pre-Schools by category	86
4.21	Adequacy of the Important Teaching-Learning materials in the Pre-Schools by category	88
4.22	Problems encountered by headteachers	90
4.23	Satisfaction of headteachers with the conditions and terms of service by category	92
4.24	Amount of fees paid per term by category	96

## List of abbreviations

AMI	-	Association Montessori Internationale
CC	-	City Council
CICECE	-	City Centre for Early Childhood Education
CPE	-	Certificate of Primary Education
CS	-	Church Sponsored
DICECE	-	District Centres for Early Childhood Education
ECE	-	Early Childhood Education
IDRC	-	International Development Research Centre
KCPE	-	Kenya Certificate of Primary Education
KCE	-	Kenya Certificate of Education
KCSE	-	Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education
KHA	-	Kindergarten's Headmistresses Association
KIE	-	Kenya Institute of Education
KJSE	-	Kenya Junior Secondary Education
NACECE	-	National Centre for Early Childhood Education
NAEYC	-	National Association for the Education of Young Children
Pr	-	Private Pre-schools
SES	-	Socio-Economic Status
SH	-	Self Help

## Abstract

This study focuses on the professional qualities of teachers in urban pre-school institutions and how these qualities are affected by various factors resulting from sponsorship. It is assumed that the focus on Nairobi City may shed a general light about the prevailing conditions in the other urban areas of Kenya. The term *professional qualities* refers to academic qualifications, professional qualifications and environmental conditions that affect the performance of the teacher.

Data was collected from 20 pre-school institutions in Nairobi, five from each of the following categories: City Council (CC), Church Sponsored (CS), Private (P) and Self-Help (SH) pre-school institutions. Interviews, questionnaires, observations and document analysis were the four research instruments employed in the study. Headteachers were interviewed and pre-school teachers were given questionnaires to fill. The objectives were to examine, in Nairobi:

- ◆ Academic qualifications of pre-school teachers,
- ◆ Professional qualifications of pre-school teachers,
- ◆ Variations in the teaching methods being used in different categories of pre-school institutions, and
- ◆ Variations in the physical facilities in the schools and teachers' conditions and terms of service.

A number of important findings emerged from the study. Regarding the academic qualifications, most of the pre-school teachers are Kenya Certificate of Education holders. Those with Kenya Certificate of Primary Education or equivalent had joined the profession much earlier and had taught for ten years or more. They were prevalent in the CS and SH Categories. Most of the teachers are trained, although the training varies. The largest number is trained by City Centre for

Early Childhood Education (CICECE). Some are trained by the Montessori (Child Development) Institute. Others are trained by Kindergartens Headmistress Association (KHA).

The heads of the pre-schools unanimously agreed that training is very important for pre-school teachers because it gives the latter a better ability on how to handle children. Majority of the headteachers agreed that, with long experience, a teacher is able to appreciate his/her profession more. The teachers with the longest experience are in the CC category.

There are three main teaching methods prevalent in the pre-school institutions in Nairobi, i.e., the Activity/Ministry, the Montessori and the KHA methods. No significant difference was observed between the Activity and the KHA methods, neither in style nor in content. All the CC and SH schools in the sample used the Activity method. The schools using the Montessori method were from the CS category. The pre-schools used a variety of methods, although the Activity method was the most commonly used.

Most schools, irrespective of category, have only fairly adequate physical and teaching - learning facilities. But the category hardest hit with inadequate facilities is the SH. The CC schools enjoy good physical facilities due to availability of space for expansion. Teachers unanimously agreed that availability of adequate physical facilities was crucial for them to execute their role well. Teaching-learning materials were equally found to be of great importance to the teachers' work because pre-school children need a lot of these materials in class.

The conditions and terms of service for pre-school teachers were found to be very poor. Apart from the CC and some SH pre-schools, where teachers are employed on permanent and pensionable terms, most pre-school teachers are employed on temporary basis.

The study concludes that pre-school teachers receive training, although this varies. The level of education required for teachers in the profession is rising. There exists serious disparities in the pre-school institutions by sponsorship. This is evident in the methods of teaching, physical facilities, teaching - learning materials, conditions and terms of service for teachers. The SES of

the areas in which the schools are found contribute to the disparities. The CS category is the most affected by the socio-economic disparity.

The kind of training received, the physical facilities, the teaching - learning materials, and the remuneration of teachers all affect their work.

Although the early educators urged teachers not to overload children with a lot of knowledge beyond their age, actual and intensive teaching is going on in the pre-schools.

The study, therefore, recommends that there be a clear-cut policy on pre-school teacher training in Kenya. Possibilities of uniformity both in the duration and in the content of training should be explored. The government should come up with a policy on the minimum requirements for teachers' terms and conditions of service. Parents should be sensitized on what is good for their children at pre-school age. More training opportunities should be extended to pre-school teachers, e.g., refresher courses and on-the-job training. Non-governmental organizations should also be called upon to assist in funding pre-school projects and to uplift poor pre-school institutions.

# CHAPTER 1

## BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

### 1.0 Introduction

This study focuses on the professional qualities of teachers in urban pre-school institutions and on how these qualities are affected by various factors as per Sponsorship. The term professional qualities refers to academic qualifications, professional qualifications and environmental conditions that affect the performance of the teacher. This chapter states the problem, objectives, significance of the study, scope and limitations and gives the conceptual framework.

### 1.1 Background to the Problem

The strength of any educational system largely depends upon the quality of its teachers. However progressive its aims, modern and abundant its equipment, efficient the administration, the success of any educational enterprise is determined by the teachers.<sup>1</sup> This is true of the whole educational system right from the pre-school level.

The early educators, e.g., Froebel, Montessori and Rousseau<sup>2</sup> show clearly that the early years of the child's education contribute a lot to his/her later development. Thus, teachers at this stage ought to be well prepared and equipped in order to bring up the children for a worthwhile future.

America, for example, has for many years developed pre-school education in several aspects. At first, welfare and health issues were of great concern and, later on, child study movements were pegged on psychological studies. The child study movements were affiliated to colleges which had laboratory nursery schools for providing a research setting for students of child development and

training for teachers.<sup>3</sup> The Headstart programme brought with it a new vigour for early childhood teacher training since it emphasized the educational dimension as opposed to the earlier programmes which emphasized the social and health needs of children<sup>4</sup>. Thus, teachers in America are trained in higher institutions of learning, e.g., in universities and colleges. This is because the Americans realize the importance of a strong base in ECE for later educational strength of the child.

The Western world, therefore, has experienced a major leap forward as far as ECE is concerned, especially in the training of personnel. This is not so with Africa. There is a general feeling all over Africa that anyone can teach in pre-school institutions. Nigeria, for example, is a country that has experienced growth in its educational system. Yet, they do not have stipulated requirements for teaching in pre-primary institutions. The certification for primary school teachers is considered adequate also for pre-school teaching. In fact, in Nigeria, the general opinion is that the pre-primary level is where the least qualified teachers should work.<sup>5</sup>

In Kenya, the need for ECE is not a very new development. Before independence, pre-school institutions mainly catered for European and Asian communities since education for Africans was not given priority.<sup>6</sup> The first pre-school institutions for Africans emerged in the urban areas and also in the concentration camps which had been set up during the Mau Mau era. These centres only provided custodial care for children while their parents were engaged in forced labour; no educational dimension was attached to them.

After independence, there was considerable expansion of pre-school institutions due to the self-help projects started all over the country. Women kept nursery schools within their projects and appointed one of them to teach the children. The Ministry of Housing and Social Services took over the responsibility of pre-school education in 1966 and, for the first time, the government saw the need for the training of teachers.

However, the 1968 Education Act does not mention pre-school education since at that time it was not under the Ministry of Education. In 1970, the Ministry of Education took over the responsibility of pre-school education and embarked on reviewing the ECE programme.

In 1971, the pre-school education programme was inaugurated. The Bernard van Leer Foundation assisted the Ministry of Education in the programme. Its aim was to develop suitable and relevant programmes for training and curriculum development to improve the quality of pre-school education in Kenya. One of their major objectives was 'to devise a teacher training programme for upgrading and preparation of early childhood education in Kenya'.

The first National Seminar on ECE was held in Malindi in 1982. During the seminar, the idea of establishing a National Centre for Early Childhood Education (NACECE) was hatched. ECE was to focus on children who had not enrolled in primary schools, especially below the age of six. NACECE still carries out the task of coordinating ECE and training in the country. Through DICECE (District Centres for Early Childhood Education) the NACECE is able to follow up activities for ECE in the country.

The second National Seminar on ECE was held in Jadini in 1987. During this seminar, it was suggested that training was essential for pre-school teachers because 'they deal with most critical and sensitive period of children's lifetime which psychologists refer to as 'formative years'. It was through training that teachers would acquire skills and knowledge which would help them understand the children and help them to grow properly.

The training of pre-school teachers is geared towards improving the quality of pre-school teachers and the production of an ideal pre-school teacher. There are several roles that are considered to be essential for an ideal pre-school teacher. These are, among others:-

- Guardian or caretaker: The teacher as a guardian occupies the position of a mother (father), seeing that the children are well taken care of.

- Guide: The teacher sees that the children embark on the learning process. She/he facilitates a suitable environment for early childhood learning.
- Actress (Actor): The teacher is a person with the ability to present a lesson by acting or doing.
- Leader: The teacher knows his/her field of specialization thoroughly, demonstrating his/her ability knowledge and understanding. This is important because a teacher may have all the desirable personal qualities yet not be a good teacher. Basic information, understanding, knowledge, skills, competence, and appreciation ability can only be secured through training and experience. The teacher must be endowed with the above in daily work.
- Model: The children should be able to look upon the teacher as an example in life.

7

Thus it is evident from these roles that the cornerstone for early education and care is the training in the field. These are important if a teacher is to achieve the objectives of pre-school education in Kenya, which are stated below:

- \* to provide the child with an informal education geared towards developing the child's mental capabilities and physical growth;
- \* to help the child enjoy living and learning through play;
- \* to help the child build good habits for effective living as an individual and a member of the society;
- \* to help the child appreciate his cultural background and customs;
- \* to encourage spiritual and moral growth of the child;
- \* to develop the child's imagination, self-reliance and thinking skills;
- \* to enrich the child's experiences, enabling him cope with school life; and
- \* to establish the link between pre-school and primary education. <sup>8</sup>

It is thus evident from the National Objectives that the teacher plays a major role in fulfilling them. The child at this tender age needs guidance in every aspect of learning. Therefore, the ability of the teacher to fulfil this task is of paramount importance.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

Pre-school education in Kenya is sponsored by any of the following: Local authorities, Churches, Self-help groups, private organizations and individuals. These variations in sponsorship play an important role in the running of these institutions. This study examines the variations in the academic and professional qualities of teachers in the pre-school institutions by type of sponsorship.

## 1.3 Objectives

The general objective of this study is to shed light on the diversity of ECE in Nairobi.

The specific objectives are to examine:

- a) Academic qualifications of pre-school teachers.
- b) Professional qualifications of pre-school teachers.
- c) Variations in the teaching methods being used in different categories of pre-school institutions.
- d) Variations in the physical facilities in the schools and teachers' conditions and terms of service.

## 1.4 Significance of the Study

Since the study examines the quality of teachers in pre-school institutions, the findings will be of help to the teacher trainers by availing data for assisting in the training of teachers, and for helping in the expansion of training. The curriculum developers will see the need to design a uniform

curriculum that will be suitable for all young children. The study will, by the standards of today, help parents to choose schools for their children. The study will also help those concerned with the provision of equal education opportunities to know how and where to place emphasis. The researcher hopes that the findings will shed light on the situation prevailing in all urban areas and open up gaps for further study.

### 1.5 Scope and Limitations of the Study

Due to limitations in time, space and resources, the researcher has studied pre-school institutions situated in Nairobi. The situation prevailing in the rural pre-school institutions is reserved for a separate study. A lot has been described and identified about the professional qualities of teachers in ECE. This study focuses on the educational and professional qualifications of teachers in ECE.

### 1.6 Conceptual Framework

Pioneers of early childhood education, e.g. Froebel, Montessori and Rousseau<sup>9</sup> strongly believed that with proper guidance in his early years, the child will be able to face adulthood with confidence. Thus, referring to schema 1.2 below, if a child is misdirected at the beginning, his later development is also likely to be affected {Box B}. Hess and Croft state that:

... first learnings serve as a filter through which subsequent experiences are understood and interpreted. Because they are novel experiences, whatever is learned first is likely to make the greatest impression. Also, once something is learned and a pattern of behaviour is established, it is more difficult to learn to do the same thing in another way.<sup>10</sup>

To aid the teacher to fulfil this task are materials requiring to be developed, made available and used efficiently {Box C}.

For a pre-school teacher to fulfil this task positively and efficiently, training is important. Repeated studies indicate that the factor most often associated with quality child care is a stable, trained teacher. Trained personnel are the backbone of quality in the care of young children.<sup>11</sup>

Training, therefore, equips the teacher with the necessary skills. The trained teacher is able to trace the child's mental development and offer what is suitable for the child through appropriate teaching - learning materials. Training should be an on-going process. A teacher learns more about children as he/she goes on with daily work, attends seminars and workshops and uses relevant reading and study materials. Thus training, be it pre-service, in-service or on-the-job, goes a long way to prepare the teacher for his/her work {Box D}.

Katz states that pre-school teachers need retraining for as long as they stay in the profession, especially in their first five years.<sup>12</sup> Pre-school teaching is so demanding that, if a teacher's skills are not upgraded through seminars and workshops, he/she may end up being confused.

Katz, therefore, identified four developmental stages for pre-school teachers, i.e., Survival, Consolidation, Renewal and Maturity [Schema 1.1]. In the first stage of survival, which is the first year of teaching, the teacher is asking him/herself whether she/he will make it. This is when the teacher needs encouragement, reassurance, comfort and guidance.

In the second stage of consolidation, the teacher is reading to consolidate the overall gains made during the first stage. He/she is capable of identifying children's needs. Thus the teacher needs access to specialists and advice from colleagues.

In the third stage of renewal, the teacher begins to revise her teaching techniques through reading and the experience gained. This is the time when she/he needs, for example, to meet other people, read journals and join professional associations.

In the fourth stage of maturity, the teacher comes to terms with herself/himself as a teacher. Therefore, he/she yearns to know more about the profession. This is the time when she/he needs more training and participation in conferences and seminars.

**Schema 1.1: Stages of Development and Training Needs for Pre-School Teachers.**

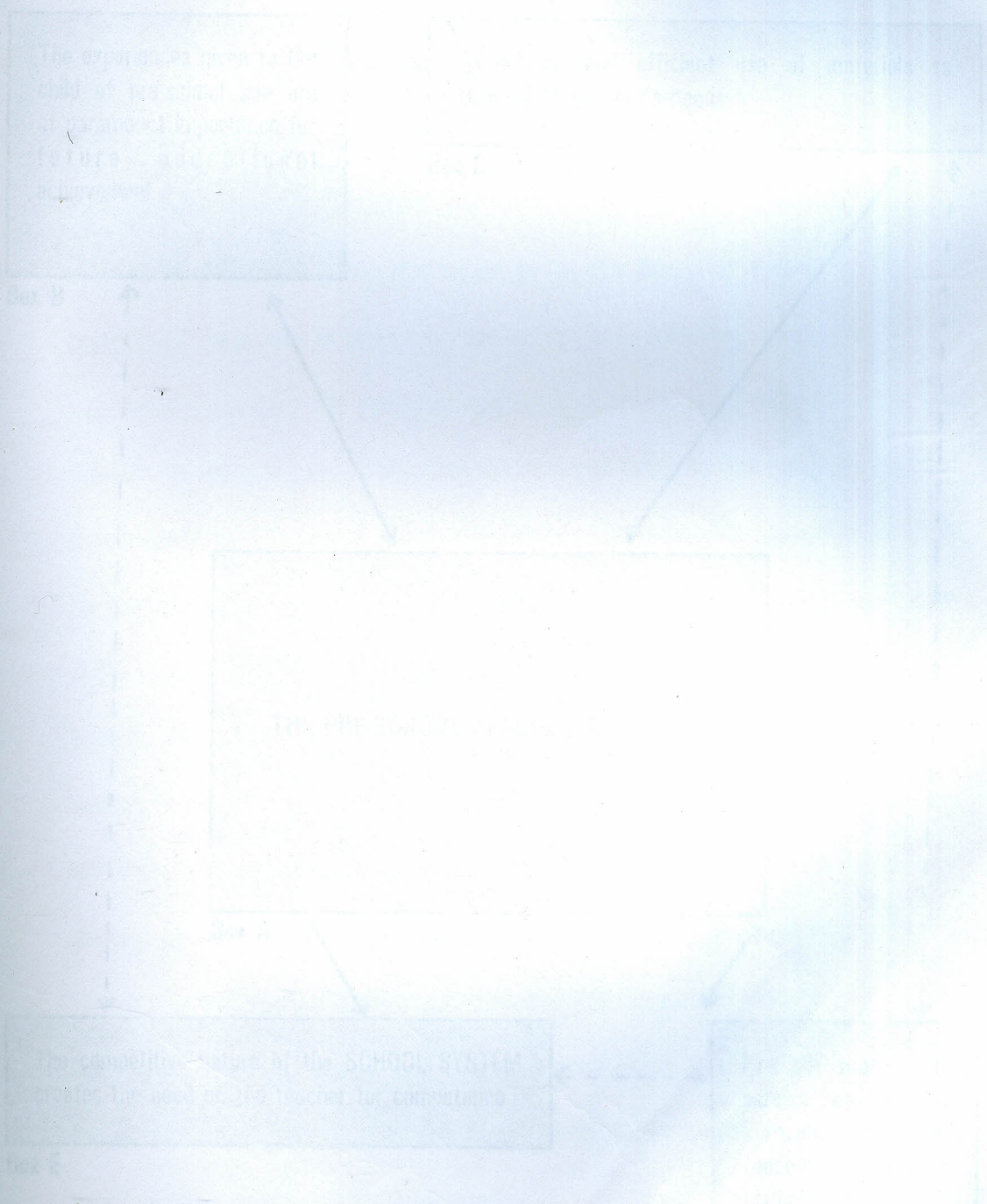
Developmental stages	TRAINING NEEDS					
	0	1YR	2YR	3YR	4YR	5Y
Stage IV Maturity	Seminars, institutes, courses, degree programmes, books, journals, conferences					
Stage III Renewal	Conferences, professional associations, journals, magazines, films etc.					
Stage II Consolidation	On site assistance, access to specialists, colleague advice, consultants					
Stage 1 Survival	On site support and technical assistance					

Source: L.G. Katz, 1977.

Katz developmental stages help the researcher in this study by providing a clearer understanding of the quality of pre-school teachers. Therefore, the training needs of the teachers on-the-job, according to Katz, are explored with a view to establishing how they boost teacher's quality.

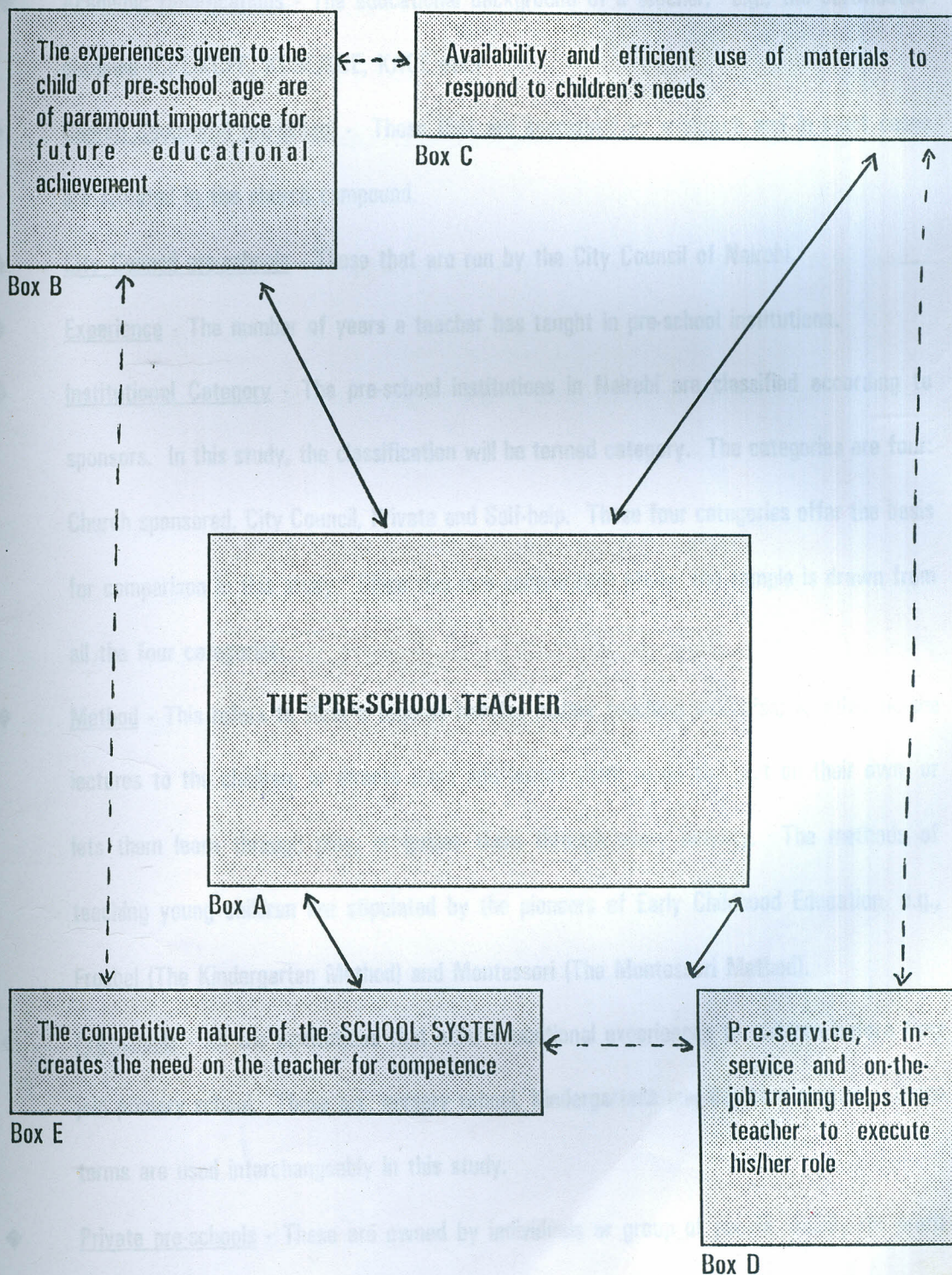
The pre-school teacher should be competent in order to measure to the competitive nature of the school system {Box E}. Since education is becoming increasingly competitive, parents want their children to go to school early so as to have a strong base for their future education. Owing to the limited places in Standard One in the urban areas, there is a tendency to admit only those who have successfully completed nursery school education, thus posing a challenge to the pre-school teachers.

It is, therefore, in this light that the professional qualities of teachers in pre-school institutions are examined. Below, the researcher represents these ideas schematically.



**Schema 1.2**

**The Conceptual Framework**



## 1.7 Operational Definitions:

In this section, terms are defined, as used in this work.

- ◆ Academic Qualifications - The educational background of a teacher, e.g., the certificates obtained (CPE/KCPE, KCSE/KCE, KACE etc.)
- ◆ Church Sponsored pre-school - Those that are sponsored by a church and in most cases are situated in the church compound.
- ◆ City Council pre-schools - Those that are run by the City Council of Nairobi.
- ◆ Experience - The number of years a teacher has taught in pre-school institutions.
- ◆ Institutional Category - The pre-school institutions in Nairobi are classified according to sponsors. In this study, the classification will be termed category. The categories are four: Church sponsored, City Council, Private and Self-help. These four categories offer the basis for comparison in this study. Since this is a comparative study, the sample is drawn from all the four categories.
- ◆ Method - This refers to How a teacher handles his/her teaching activities; whether he/she lectures to the children, or directs them and leaves them to do the rest on their own, or lets them learn through play, or guides them through every activity. The methods of teaching young children are stipulated by the pioneers of Early Childhood Education, e.g., Froebel (The Kindergarten Method) and Montessori (The Montessori Method).
- ◆ Pre-schools - All the institutions that offer educational experiences to children before they join primary school. These are: nursery school, Kindergartens and day-care centres. These terms are used interchangeably in this study.
- ◆ Private pre-schools - These are owned by individuals or group of people, mainly for profit making.

- ◆ **Professional Qualifications** - This refers to teacher training pertaining to the field of ECE, e.g., in-service course for nursery school, child psychology, attendance of an early childhood teacher training course, such as that run by the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI), which trains Montessori teachers, and that run by the Kindergarten's Headmistresses Association (based on Froebel's ideas).
- ◆ **Professional Qualities** - This term refers to the academic and professional qualifications, and to the experience of the teacher.
- ◆ **Self-Help Pre-schools** - These are sponsored by communities such as women's organizations through Harambee efforts.
- ◆ **Social Class** - A cross-section of society sharing same values and socio-economic status.

## 1.8 Summary

This is an introductory chapter which has given a background to the problem. A statement of the research problem as well as clarification of the same have been made. The next chapter is a review of the literature.

## Footnotes

1. D.N. Sifuna, Western Traditions and the Status of the Teaching Profession in Africa (Inaugural Lecture, Kenyatta University, 26th April, 1990) p.1.
2. Rousseau, Froebel and Maria Montessori are among the early educators who advocated for proper guidance in Early Childhood Education (ECE). See also Review of the Literature; the Early Educators, section 2.1.1 below.
3. K.E. Allen and Betty Hart, The Early Years: Arrangements for Learning (New Jersey: Prentice Hall Inc. 1984) p.8.
4. Headstart programmes were started in America around the year 1965 to help poor children of pre-school going age (2-6) to have a good start in education. Later on, they emphasized on a good start (Headstart) in English language.
5. O.M. Onibokun, "Early Childhood Care and Education in Nigeria" In P.P. Olmsted and D.P. Weikart (eds) How Nations Serve Young Children: Profiles of Child Care and Education in 14 Countries (Michigan: The High Scope Press, 1989) p.220.
6. For this and the information following See K.I.E., Evaluation of the Pre-school Education Project (K.I.E., May 1982) pp.10ff.
7. G.N. Amayo, Modern Trends in Early Childhood Education (Nairobi: Kenyatta University College, 1982) p.60.
8. K.I.E., Op.Cit.
9. The works of early educators e.g. Montessori, Froebel etc. confirm this, coupled with the works of psychologists in the area of child development e.g. Arnold Gessel, Bruner, Piaget etc.
10. R.D. Hess and Doreen J. Croft. Teachers of Young Children (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.1975) p.viii.
11. See footnote 9.
12. L.G. Katz, Talks with Teachers: Reflections on ECE. (Washington D.C. NAEYC, 1977), pp. 7-13.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

#### 2.0 Introduction

In Chapter 1, the background to the problem was given and the problem stated. The objectives and conceptual framework were also presented.

Pre-school education is not compulsory as far as the Kenyan Constitution is concerned. Although this is so, it is taken as a prerequisite for primary school entrance in the present Kenya, especially in the urban areas.<sup>1</sup> All the same, as Gakuru observes, this area has received very little attention from researchers in Kenya.<sup>2</sup>

In the following review of the literature, the importance of early childhood education is examined, taking into consideration the pioneer historical foundations and the African Traditional Education. Research on the quality of pre-school teachers and their methods of teaching is also reviewed. Finally, research on the impact of pre-school intervention is presented.

#### 2.1 Early Childhood Education and the Role of Teachers

##### 2.1.1 Early Educators

Among the early educators who advocated for ECE were J.J. Rousseau (1712-1778), F.A. Froebel (1782-1852), and Maria Montessori (1870-1952). They had one common goal when they recognized the necessity of providing education to young children suffering severe deprivation due

to war and/or slum conditions.<sup>3</sup> Since the children that they were aiming at were deprived socially, psychologically and intellectually, they created compensatory education for them.

Rousseau stated his philosophy of education and learning in his book Emile. He was concerned with the natural growth of the child. He wrote that:

Education comes to us from nature, from men, or from things. The inner growth of our organs and faculties is the education of nature. Therefore, the education of the earliest years... consists .... in preserving the heart from vice and from the spirit of error.<sup>4</sup>

Froebel (1782-1852) is linked with the success of the kindergarten as an institution for the education of young children.<sup>5</sup> He viewed man as innately good, unlike the modern idea of man having the capacity for good or evil, or the earlier judgement of man as being inherently evil. He wrote that "the nature of man is in itself good, and, surely, there are, in man, qualities and tendencies in themselves good".<sup>6</sup> The child is, therefore, able to develop into a good adult if only he was accorded the greatest degree of freedom. Education is supposed to guard and protect the child.

Froebel lived at a time when there was lack of unity in Germany. This perturbed him so much that it permeated his educational thought. He thus yearned for unity and harmony at both national and individual level.<sup>7</sup> This unity became a measuring rod by which he tested the educational programs of others, where he looked for unity even in the subjects taught. These subjects had to reflect a common goal. Children had to be encouraged to grow in union with the environment. The teacher's role was to observe the children and give them a chance, not only to learn, but also to play. The child was supposed to be given a chance to discover because

An unidentifiable longing urges him to seek the things of nature, the hidden objects, plants and flowers, etc., in nature; for a constant presentiment assures him that the things which satisfy

the longing of the heart cannot be found on the surface; out of the depth and darkness they must be brought forth.<sup>8</sup>

Thus, Froebel not only advocated the importance of learning in ECE, but also emphasized the importance of play. Thus, during training the teacher was supposed to be made aware of this fact.

Maria Montessori (1870-1952) dedicated all her life to work with children. She had worked with mentally defective children. The methods she used on these children, she felt, were also appropriate for children in general. During the time when the Rome Association for Good Building had built a number of flats in a slum section in Rome, vandalism became a problem. This was due to the large numbers of children who were left unattended to during the day.<sup>9</sup> Thus, the landlords decided to set aside space in their buildings and invited Montessori to set up a program in their premises.

During this endeavour, Montessori came up with ideas on the best way to handle children. The teacher was not supposed to rush the child. He was supposed to wait for the child's inner life to organize itself. She was, therefore, primarily an observer and a student of human behaviour, rather than a lecturer and shaper of behaviour.<sup>10</sup>

For the children, materials were aids to learning, not ends in themselves. Thus, the objects, she wrote

.... do not constitute means of teaching, but they are an aid for the child who chooses them himself, takes possession of them, uses them and employs himself with them according to his own tendencies and needs and just as long as he is interested in them.<sup>11</sup>

The teacher's main task was, therefore, to explain the use of the materials to the children.

Three main points emerge from the views of the early educators:

- a) Early childhood education is important for a child's later development.
- b) The teacher is supposed to give the child a chance to grow and learn naturally.
- c) The importance of play is crucial in ECE.

The three points above set the stage for the tenets of today in ECE.

The ideals of the early educators are followed today, albeit to a small scale. Research confirms that many countries have not been able to achieve the goals of the early educators.

The Institute for Development of Educational Activities (IDEA) in England, in their study indicated that there was still not much being done in the pre-school sector. Although the early educators believed that pre-school education was important for every child, most people in England did not take it seriously because they thought it should be provided only for working mothers while children from middle class homes should not be separated from their mothers.<sup>12</sup>

However, the research revealed that the guiding philosophies, theories and educational models of Froebel and Pestalozzi, which focus on integrity, freedom and opportunity for the growth of the young child are still very evident and are reflected in the respect and care shown the children in English pre-school centres.<sup>13</sup> But the research also revealed the

... presence of psychoanalytic teachings and the concomitant absence of the influence of Montessori ... and of any strong cognitive orientation.<sup>14</sup>

The above study is relevant to the present study in that it acknowledges the importance of the ideas of the early educators in pre-school education.

Another study done in Israel by IDEA also indicates that the pre-school institutions still do not adhere to the ideals of the early educators. In Israel, it is believed that by providing equal opportunity and uniform treatment to all children, the vast differences within the immigrant populations would decrease with time.<sup>15</sup>

A few selected pre-school classes were used for a Montessori evaluation in Israel. The supervisors of pre-school education were eager to evaluate the effectiveness of a modified Montessori system in the local schools. Following two years of general, positive, subjective evaluation of the experimental programs by the supervisors, the Ministry of Education and Culture examined the effectiveness of the system in terms of testable results in children.

The results indicated that children in the Montessori - style classes made significant progress in perceptual discrimination skills and in their approach to problem-solving situations. No efforts have been made to expand this to other pre-schools. Thus, the ideals of the early educators have not been met, although the problem of constant immigration into Israel renders the policy makers unable to implement these ideals.<sup>16</sup>

There are pre-schools in Kenya whose teaching methods are based on the Montessori theory. The study in Israel is relevant to the present one because it helps to shed light on how Montessori ideals are used by teachers in urban schools, outside Kenya.

A study done in Tanzania on the learning activities of pre-school education showed that the country does not have good teaching - learning facilities for pre-school children. The study showed that the pre-school teacher is inadequate, not trained in her/his field and, thus, there is poor teaching - learning strategies.<sup>17</sup> It further revealed that pre-school education in Tanzania is not as effective as it ought to be in giving the children the required developmental orientation because of the absence of a systematic curriculum, professionally developed.<sup>18</sup>

The foregoing examples show clearly that many countries are yet to meet the ideals of pre-school education. In Kenya, there are many kindergartens which follow Froebel's model. The Kindergarten's Headmistresses Association offers training to teachers based on this model. There is also a training college based on the Montessori method. Being a study of the professional qualities of teachers, the role of the early educators is important because they set the ideals for pre-school teacher training.

### 2.1.2 Early Childhood Education in the Context of African Indigenous Education

In the African traditional society, children received maximum care and education, not only from their parents, but also from the society at large. The birth of a child was welcomed by the whole society. A child was a sign of continuity of a family lineage and society and was, therefore, counted as a great blessing.

For a child to grow up to be a responsible member of the community, he needed education. Thus, he got his lessons from the whole society. Children learned by living. Mothers were charged with the responsibility of educating young children. The whole society needed to see that children were well taken care of.<sup>19</sup>

In the African traditional society, children before the age of six were regarded as innocent, not knowing the difference between good and bad. Among the Acholi, for example, the child below six years old was regarded as pe ng'eyo piny (he does not know the world).<sup>20</sup> Thus, the period around six ... was considered by most parents to be the true foundation years for proper future adult life as most children in this period were taken for granted to know ... the difference between good and bad.<sup>21</sup>

Parents did their best to instil discipline in children for both social and moral adjustment. They ensured that their children were always peaceful. They were taught the importance of sleep, bladder control, safety precautions and hygiene from this early stage. It was because of the concern of the whole family and society that the African child grew up well adjusted early enough to his environment. Due to this extended family set-up, everyone was concerned with children's welfare. Thus,

Traditional African education was basically practical in nature. It was designed to develop one's character, physical aptitudes and techniques to enable one to live a full and productive life in society.<sup>22</sup>

Children learnt by imitating or listening. Traditions were carried on orally from one generation to another. During 'imitative play', boys and girls played by imitating older people. They could play with toys resembling those used by grown-ups, e.g., digging implements and pots for carrying water.<sup>23</sup> They also made their own toys, in addition to the ones they collected from their homesteads.

Knowledge in the traditional society was passed through certain age-groupings. Up to the age of about two years the infant was constantly with the mother, the latter communicating with the infant largely through lullabies. The mother paid special attention to language and physical movements. Later on, the child was entrusted to older girls and other siblings who played with him/her.

Thus, in the African traditional society, children were special and were accorded their education from an early age. Their teachers, who were mainly their mothers, executed this role accordingly and were answerable to the whole clan in case of neglect of duty. Discipline, therefore, was very rigid and paramount. Among the Kpelle of Liberia, the child was taught how to be obedient to the elders. She/he was not supposed to question anything she/he was supposed to do.<sup>24</sup>

Just as the early educators saw the society as playing a major role in the child's education, so the African traditional society viewed the child as their child. Emphasis on play by the early educators is also present in the African traditional education. In both cases, the child is supposed to be given a chance to be creative.

With the disintegration of the African family today, the child needs compensation for the security she/he does not have in the extended family. All day long, her parents are not with her/him. Fathers and mothers both go to work very early and come home very late. She/he is in the hands of a househelp who many not do more than just watch over her/him. Parents are, therefore, opting for pre-school institutions which they hope will cater for the needs of the children. The pre-school teacher plays an important role in moulding the young children, who, in the African

traditional society, were taken care of by the mother and the clan as a whole. There is need, therefore, to find out if the pre-school teacher executes this role in the desired manner, which is the task of this study.

## 2.2 Quality of Pre-School Teachers and Performance

The quality of pre-school teachers is a matter of concern in many countries. Although there has been many definitions of teacher quality, they all seem to include the academic qualifications and the training of a teacher. C.E. Beeby is among the leading educators who have attempted to articulate the problem of quality in terms of educational background and training of teachers. He stresses that those two elements are both important for the production of an effective teacher, who, in turn, influences the performance of the children.<sup>25</sup>

Having qualified pre-school teachers not only academically but also professionally, should not be taken for granted due to the importance of the formative years (ages 2-5). It is sad that

... apparently we cannot afford to let a patient die in the hands of an untrained doctor, but we can let the untrained teacher to warp the personality of an innocent tender youth without even a murmur.<sup>26</sup>

Thus, for pre-school teachers to execute their role effectively, they need training as well as devotion.

A year of schooling is not just a year of schooling. It can be anything from a delight to a torment depending on the imagination, devotion as well as cognitive skills of the teacher.<sup>27</sup>

The field of ECE is diverse and the training of teachers in the field is equally diverse.<sup>28</sup>

There are differences in terms of philosophy, curriculum styles, ages of children served and even the

length of the teaching day. Some pre-school teachers are trained in social work, nursing and in teaching. There is, therefore, no uniform training pattern for pre-school teachers. But the general agreement is that training is important.<sup>29</sup>

Research done in the U.S.A among both trainees and practitioners of early childhood education revealed that they were not satisfied with the training they received because:-

- a) training offered in pre-service programs was too theoretical and idealistic.
- b) It was not sufficiently relevant or useful.<sup>30</sup>

An IDRC sponsored research indicated that teacher attitudes were affected by training.<sup>31</sup>

Use of more authoritarian pupil control methods was reported with untrained teachers in Iraq. In Sierra Leone training was found related to indirect style of teaching, better preparation of lessons and the quality of professional relationships. Higher qualifications were related to positive attitudes towards teaching and the profession as well as the use of various classroom techniques, e.g., employing modern teaching aids and inquiry procedures.<sup>32</sup>

The above study is important to the present one because it shows the importance of training to a teacher's work. The present study examines the effect of training on the pre-school teacher's work, his/her methods of teaching, and attitudes towards the teaching profession as influenced by varied environmental factors. Although the above study was a survey of many countries and involved teachers from other levels of schooling, the findings help this researcher to understand the parameters of the present study and the emphasis on the teacher and the importance of training.

Another study done on the investments that boost learning in developing countries<sup>33</sup> indicated that academic and professional qualifications of teachers have a bearing on their teaching effectiveness. The study came up with the following results, among others:-

- The teachers' years in primary and secondary schooling raise their verbal skills.

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- The teachers' years in primary and secondary schooling raise their verbal skills.

- Teacher training boosts teaching skills.
- Teachers' total number of years of formal schooling raises verbal skills and teaching effectiveness.
- More highly schooled teachers have better verbal skills and teaching effectiveness.
- Upgrading the skills of current teaching staff raises the quality of instruction, leading to higher student achievement.<sup>34</sup>

In the above study, years of formal schooling and training are deemed to be important to the teacher for the success of his/her teaching career. The present study examines the teachers' academic and professional qualifications and the impact of the environment to the pre-school teachers' career.

There are other factors that may influence a teacher's quality, e.g, facilities in the school, remuneration, conditions and terms of service.

Physical facilities in a school may ease or make a teacher's work difficult as Katz says:

The physical environment of a pre-school is likely to have a large impact on the program in terms of the ease or difficulty with which activities can be managed, the varieties of the activities offered, frequency of indoor vs outdoor activities and the ease with which the safety of the children can be maintained.<sup>35</sup>

One study of Headstart classes in the United States indicated that the amount of controlling behaviour of teachers varied with the number of square feet per child.<sup>36</sup>

The World Bank study referred to above indicated that textbooks, writing materials and teacher quality consistently influence student achievement.<sup>37</sup>

The poor remuneration of pre-school teachers has been attributed to the lack of sophisticated skills.<sup>38</sup> Thus, because of poor pay, people with skills do not seek employment in this

field. Rigorous or lengthy training, therefore, is not attractive to candidates when the ultimate pay scale is so low.

A study done in U.S.A among pre-school teachers revealed that they were dissatisfied with their work because of the conditions and terms of service they were subjected to. The teachers were not earning salaries that would make them live comfortably as in other professions. There were no fringe benefits such as house allowance and travelling allowance. Most of them had long experience working with children, since they enjoyed it, but were demoralized. They liked their work and compared themselves to professionals like engineers and doctors. Yet their benefits were very poor compared to those of the elementary school teacher.<sup>39</sup>

The above study guides the researcher in our study to examine factors such as school facilities and teachers' conditions and terms of service with a view to establishing how they influence teacher quality.

A compilation of researches done for the World Bank on teacher satisfaction and dissatisfaction indicated that higher paid teachers possessed higher language and instructional skills, which, indeed, raise students' achievement.<sup>40</sup>

Although the above finding was not based on pre-school teachers, it is, nevertheless, important for this study because it shows that a teacher's salary affects his/her performance. Our study, therefore, is concerned with the conditions and terms of service of the pre-school teachers and how these affect their quality.

In Kenya, the type of training for pre-school teachers has been a matter of concern although research in the area has not been intensive. When the pre-school education project was being launched at the KIE in 1971, the development of pre-school education manpower was given priority. Training was, therefore, the main component of the total project. The general training objectives aimed at devising a teacher training programme for upgrading and preparing teachers for ECE in Kenya, and to identify and train pre-school personnel for occupying supervisory roles in the pre-

school education programme of the country.<sup>41</sup> Training is still today coordinated by the KIE through the NACECE.

Apart from the KIE programs, other voluntary organizations have been taking part in the training of ECE personnel. The AMI admits students who are sponsored by a clinic, a pre-school or a mission.<sup>42</sup> The training, which is divided into theoretical and practical components, is intended to equip the teacher with the ideals of the Montessori method.

Elsewhere, the KHA offers a post-secondary school early childhood teacher education. The KHA believes that:

Teachers of very young children should have a sound educational background and a training equal to that of teachers at any other stage of education as it is important to give children a firm foundation through pre-school education.<sup>43</sup>

The KHA draws principles not only from Froebel, the founder of the kindergarten, but also from those who lived after him, e.g., Maria Montessori.

In our study, the modes of training pre-school teachers are examined, with a view to establishing the effects of the training on the quality of teachers' work, and to examine the similarities and differences in the socio-environmental provisions of teachers in the different training institutions and the effects of these on teacher quality.

### 2.3 Methods of Teaching in Pre-school Institutions

Early Childhood Education has had a variety of teaching methods since the days of Froebel, Pestalozzi and Maria Montessori. These educators developed models of teaching in pre-school institutions; models which are being followed to date. Although most of the early ideas have been revised to accommodate new ones, they still permeate the core of the teaching methodology in ECE institutions.

In America, the methodology is based on the program or 'model' adopted by each institution.

There are two main models:

- a) Academic model - This is mainly geared towards preparation for Class I.
- b) Intellectual model - In this, 'discovery methods' are used, i.e., direct experience with a variety of materials and play. (cf. the Montessori method)<sup>44</sup>.

L.B. Miller, cited in Katz, analyzed and summarized the findings of three separate studies in which at least four different curriculum models were implemented and evaluated. The results indicated that no program that was evaluated appeared superior to the other when all of the immediate outcomes were considered. But those models with strong academic emphases yielded better results on academic tests than did the other models.<sup>45</sup>

It may be inferred from these findings that the academic - oriented programs did not only concentrate on class work but also catered for the total welfare of the child, e.g., in play. The fact that no significant difference was found between the programs indicated that they shared a lot of similarities in their teaching methods. The results of these studies are significant for this research because the teaching methods in different pre-school institutions are examined with a view to establishing the similarities and differences. It would be interesting to find out whether the conclusions of our study will correspond with these results.

The Montessori Method, which is an intellectual model, is used in many pre-school institutions around the world today. The method is based on the Montessori philosophy of education, which states that:

- a) Children are capable of sustained mental concentration when genuinely interested in their work.

- b) They love order and especially enjoy repetition of actions that they have already mastered.
- c) They prefer work to play and prefer didactic materials to toys.
- d) Rewards and punishments are unnecessary to motivate them.
- e) The child has a deep sense of personal dignity that is easily offended.<sup>46</sup>

Montessori defines the teacher as a directress, stating that:

One who uses my method teaches little, observes a great deal, ... directs the psychic activities of the children and their physiological development. This is why I have changed her name from teacher to directress.<sup>47</sup>

The Montessori Method has been commended for its stress on the development of character and the promotion of academic achievement in children.<sup>48</sup> However, the method has been criticized for its high degree of structure in the prepared environment which hampers children's creativity and emotional development, and for the fact that the method does not promote social co-operation and imitative play.<sup>49</sup>

Similar criticism of the Method was advanced by Beyer who said that it denies children a chance for fun:

"My criticism of the Montessori application ... lies largely in the artificiality of its focus on ritual and mastery of a technique, rather than on delight in the process and in completion of a task that needs doing".<sup>50</sup>

She further raised issues regarding the suppression of play and the emphasis placed upon the correct use of materials. This prevents imaginative use, or delight that comes from discovering and creating different uses, of the material.

Thus, it is evident from the above critique that the Montessori Method does not give much room for creativity since the children use the same materials in school every day. But it has been noted that the Method fosters character development and academic achievement. The method, therefore, if allowed to adjust more to the children's needs, would yield positive results. Our study examines the methods used by pre-school teachers in Nairobi.

The Kindergarten Method, which is a blend of the academic and the intellectual models, was developed by Froebel and has continued to influence ECE to date. The method is based on Froebel's philosophy which states that:

Young children are capable of rapid skill acquisition if they were taught through use of materials which allow them to exercise their tendency toward active play while they developed their minds.<sup>51</sup>

The emphasis of play in the Kindergarten Method emanates from Froebel's belief that play is the purest, most spiritual activity of man at the stage of pre-school, and, at the same time, typical of human life as a whole.<sup>52</sup>

This view has been supported by Cass who sees the teacher's role as that of safeguarding the child's right to play, of keeping in him a sense of wonder, of giving him time to enjoy life as he sees it, and of stimulating and encouraging his pleasure in language.<sup>53</sup>

Ratnaike is also of the view that optimal learning by children of pre-school ages takes place when children are permitted to play, explore and discover actively and spontaneously, with emphasis

on learning rather than on teaching. Thus, the training of teachers should ensure that they are prepared to provide an integrated service to the whole child.<sup>54</sup>

Teachers should, therefore, be prepared/trained according to the needs of the child which needs are not only cognitive but also psychomotor and social. It can be noted, from the discussion on the Montessori and Kindergarten methods, that there is not much difference between the two except that one emphasizes more on play than the other.

In Kenya, there are two private ECE teacher training institutions which prepare teachers on the two methods, viz., the Montessori Training College and the Kindergartens' Headmistresses Association College. These are both in Nairobi. They use the two methods respectively. Training is also offered by the government, through the CICECE, where training is based on a blend of ideas from the pioneers of ECE.

Our study seeks to find out the perceptions of teachers on these methods and whether there are any similarities and differences. The study also examines the practice of teachers, whether they give children opportunity to play and learn through discovering, or whether they dwell more on promoting rote learning and use lecture method, which, according to the early educators, are not suitable for young children.

#### **2.4 Impact of Pre-school Intervention**

Research on ECE, especially on the role of the teacher, is still scarce. For many years, there has been a general belief that anyone can teach in pre-school institutions since the children are young and need nothing more than the basics. But this trend is changing. Only the uninformed believe that anyone can teach young children. Teachers of young children ought to have education commensurate with our present understanding of lifelong influence of early childhood experiences on all aspects of human development.<sup>55</sup> Thus professional training for pre-school teachers should include some understanding of the philosophical, psychological and sociological foundations of ECE.

Studies have shown that pre-school intervention has an impact on children's learning even long after starting primary school. A research carried out in the United States, Ypsilanti, Michigan, to determine the effects of pre-school education, indicates that pre-school education has lasting effects. One group was provided with pre-school education while the control group was not. A follow-up was then made during primary school years up to grade 8. These children attended a school with a history of low academic achievement. Tests were done on both academic achievement and classroom behaviour.

The findings showed that the children who had attended pre-school performed better academically and this performance either remained constant or grew better over the years. The classroom behaviour of children who attended pre-school was consistently rated higher than that of the children without pre-school background. This difference was discerned in academic motivation, performance, verbal skills, social development and classroom conduct, among others.<sup>56</sup>

The study above shows that pre-school education is important for children. It helps them not only to perform well academically but also to adjust within school life. Although this study did not focus on the teacher, we can infer that the teacher was important in both the academic and social growth of children at this age. For the children to have had good academic motivation and capability at that age, their teachers must have played an important part. Our study seeks to find out how teachers assist children both academically and socially, a task which the study above did not address itself to. It confines itself to teachers in pre-school institutions, aiming at getting insight into their performance in the education of children.

Another study done in Chile to determine the relationship between pre-primary education and Grade one performance in primary education shows that pre-school intervention makes a difference. A sample of pre-school children was taken and a control group was also identified for comparison. The results obtained showed that children with pre-school education obtained higher scores, on average, than children without pre-school education.<sup>57</sup>

The Chile study was general in that it did not focus on certain areas like academic motivation or social adjustments of the children. But the fact that pre-school education made a difference in a child's scores in subsequent years is important. The study does not focus on the teacher as one who influences the achievement. The present study addresses itself to this question in Kenya.

From these studies, it is clear that pre-school education is important for children. The teacher's role is crucial because it fundamentally causes pre-school education to make a difference. Our study examines the quality of the pre-school teacher; how well he is prepared, in terms of training, to execute his role and how well he is doing it and with what means.

Gakuru's<sup>58</sup> research on pre-school education and access to educational opportunities in Kenya focused on how social stratification influences pre-school education, which, in turn, influences primary education. He categorized the nursery schools by cost viz., high cost, medium cost and low cost. He found out that those who attended high cost nursery schools also found their way to high cost primary schools. It was the same situation regarding the medium cost and low cost nursery schools. Performance in high cost nursery schools was found to be very good, then followed by medium cost and finally, low cost. Thus, he concluded, pre-school education perpetuated social classes in Kenya.

While Gakuru's study highlighted the structural links between pre-school and primary education, the present study focusses on the teachers' training and how this contributes to their success as pre-school teachers. Gakuru's study was different from the present one in that it had a sociological bias; in his study he showed the influence of social stratification on nursery education. The present study focusses on the quality of the teacher in his/her environment, not on education as a whole, and, essentially, it does not focus on the link between nursery and primary education.

## 2.5 Summary

Our literature review is quite extensive. On the one hand, it helps the researcher to deepen her understanding of the theory and practice of ECE. On the other hand, it guides her to focus on the question undertaken.

The literature reviewed, therefore, has related to the quality of teachers in pre-school institutions. Several research studies on teacher training, methods of teaching and the importance of facilities in pre-schools have been looked at.

The literature reviewed, therefore, relates to the quality of teachers in pre-school institutions. The contribution of the early educators, viz., J.J. Rousseau, F.A. Froebel and Maria Montessori has been discussed. Early childhood education in the context of African indigenous situation has also been considered, showing that the child's education in the African society was the responsibility of every member of the community. Literature on the quality of preschool teachers and performance has shown the importance of training and physical facilities to teachers. Review of the literature on methods of teaching in preschool institutions has revealed that there has been a variety of teaching methods, since the days of the early educators, which have continued to date. Research on the impact of early childhood intervention has shown the importance of preschool education to a child's later life.

In the next chapter, the methodology used to collect the data is described.

## Footnotes

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## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

#### 3.0 Introduction

This is a comparative study of the quality of teachers in four categories of pre-school institutions in Nairobi. These categories are: a) Private b) Church sponsored c) Self-help and d) City council. The researcher is assuming that the quality of a pre-school institution is affected by the type of sponsor. For example, it may be safely taken that most private pre-school institutions are high cost, while most self-help pre-school institutions are initiated by the low-income earners and, consequently, are very cheap in terms of school fees. The type of sponsorship, therefore, affects not only the quality of the staff but also the general quality of the schools. Katz observes that:

The variety official supervising agencies and funding sources affect the qualifications of the staff, the amount of autonomy available to the staff, the responsiveness of the curriculum and teaching methods to local preferences, values and purposes served by the institution.<sup>1</sup>

In this chapter, the researcher describes the comparative education methodology used, the sampling procedures, and the research instruments, as well as the method of data analysis.

### 3.1 The Comparative Method

Comparative education is a field that has experienced tremendous growth over the years. In the past, comparative education concentrated on nation-state comparisons but this has not been the case in recent years. Foster says:

"Intellectual and methodological advances in comparative education have led to the virtual demise of the "universal expert" and most practitioners in the field tend, in fact, to be specialists on educational development in single countries or limited regions".<sup>2</sup>

Thus, area study-type investigations conducted in one country or on a very limited culture area basis have been more numerous and usually more productive.<sup>3</sup> Ours is an area study since it concentrates on one area, viz., Nairobi, while at the same time, it is an intranational study as it concentrates on one country, viz., Kenya.

The Scientific Method, developed by Noah and Eckstein (1969) is used in this study.<sup>4</sup> It has the following stages:

- 1) Identification and clarification of the problem.
- 2) Hypothesis building, which includes preliminary literature study and gathering of information in order to clarify the problem and set the stage for systematic and detailed study.
- 3) Definition of concepts and indicators.
- 4) Selection of cases for study in terms of
  - a) relevance to the hypotheses
  - b) major extraneous variables
  - c) economy of investigation.
- 5) Collection of data. The best way to overcome problems in data collection are:
  - a) Early formulation of hypotheses;

- b) Use of a limited number of indicators;
- c) Judicious selection of the cases.

All these steps help to overcome problems of data manageability and provide for more ready and precise comparison.

- 6) Data manipulation - verification or rejection of the hypotheses and working within the limits of what is available.
- 7) Interpretation of results.

The method was devised by the authors by turning to the contemporary social sciences. These, they wrote, were "characterized by the systematic, controlled, empirical and (whenever possible) quantitative investigation of explicitly stated hypotheses".<sup>5</sup> They, thus, stated that "comparative education represents the intersection of the social sciences, educational studies and the cross-national dimension".<sup>6</sup>

The researcher has selected this method because of its emphasis not only on objectivity but also on its ability to select cases judiciously. The method is also appropriate due to the fact that the authors recognized the importance of intranational studies when they stated that "both logically and methodologically, the rubric of comparative education should cover comparison among other kinds of units, whether larger or smaller than nations".<sup>7</sup>

### 3.2 Area of the Study

The study has been conducted in Nairobi, which was chosen, firstly, due to spatio-temporal constraints and, secondly, due to the mushrooming of a large number of pre-school institutions in Nairobi, day by day. This has prompted the researcher to probe intensively in order to find out to

been assessed to determine whether they have a bearing on teacher quality.

The survey approach has been preferred because it facilitates the use of a range of data collection techniques, such as questionnaires, interviews, document analyses and observation. These instruments have all been used in this study.

what extent this phenomenon is due to population growth, business interests, and the need to provide quality education to the young.

Nairobi is the capital city of Kenya. It enjoys the presence of industries and is the centre of all government operations. There is, therefore, always a constant rural-urban migration. The population is high and this includes that of children under the age of six. The numbers of school-going children continue increasing absolutely year after year. This creates bigger demand for schools as years go by.

Pre-schools in Nairobi have increased in number over the past five years. This steady rise raises questions on whether quality education is being provided in all these pre-school institutions and whether the teachers are prepared to fulfil the task of preparing children for life and for future school life. This is the central task of the present study, in so far as it investigates the professional qualities of ECE teachers in Nairobi.

### 3.3 The Study Approach

The survey method has been used in this study to collect detailed descriptions of the existing phenomena, with the intent of employing the data to justify current conditions and practices, and to make more intelligent plans for improving them.<sup>8</sup> The survey method is also important when one intends to gather facts rather than to manipulate variables.

Thus, facts about the teachers' academic and professional qualifications, as well as experience have been sought. In addition, the teaching methods and condition of the schools have been assessed to determine whether they have a bearing on teacher quality.

The survey approach has been preferred because it facilitates the use of a range of data collection techniques, such as questionnaires, interviews, document analyses and observation. These instruments have all been used in this study.

### 3.4 Sampling Procedures

#### 3.4.1 Institutions

By the end of the year 1993, there were 704 pre-school institutions in Nairobi.<sup>9</sup> The CICECE has divided these institutions into four categories by sponsorship, i.e. (1) Private pre-school institutions, (2) Church sponsored pre-school institutions, (3) City Council pre-school institutions and (4) Self-help pre-school institutions. Being a comparative study, all these categories are represented in our sample. Twenty institutions are sampled. The researcher has aimed at collecting qualitative data, and, therefore, a larger sample would have been cumbersome for this. 'Qualitative' term can refer to the research that is using only a small sample of interviews, whether structured or unstructured, to collect indepth information.<sup>10</sup> The twenty pre-school institutions have been purposively selected on the basis of the following:

- a) Size - The researcher has considered this factor important to help her look at the teacher-child ratio and how it affects the quality of the teacher. Thus, the schools included in this sample are those with fifty children or more. It applies to all the categories.
- b) Age - It has been assumed that, in time, a pre-school is able to adjust to the hardships that it may have undergone in the beginning. Therefore, only schools that were established five or more years earlier have been included in the study.
- c) Accessibility - Due to time and financial constraints, only the schools that are easily reachable have been selected.

The list of the pre-school institutions has been obtained from the City Centre for Early Childhood Education (CICECE). Information about the number of children as well as the year of establishment and the location of the schools have also been obtained from the same place. Two hundred and twenty (220) pre-school institutions (50 of them CC, 50 SH, 60 P, and 60 CS) met the three criteria. It was assumed that roughly a quarter of each category was thus represented. Twenty (20) of the total (9%) were selected randomly using stratified random sampling in order that all the four categories were represented. The names of the schools were written on pieces of paper which were then folded. These were placed in four small boxes. After reshuffling the boxes, five pieces of paper were randomly picked from each box, bringing the total number to twenty.

### 3.4.2 Respondents

The heads of the institutions and the teachers in those institutions are the respondents. The heads have been included because they are directly responsible for their particular pre-school institutions and, therefore, they know the patterns of the school; moreover, most of the heads either have been teaching in pre-school institutions or have taught somewhere else before. Teachers have been included because the study aims at investigating their quality in terms of their academic and professional qualifications, as well as in terms of other factors that may play in affecting their work. The teachers are also the ones who mind children, both in and outside the classroom, for as long as the children are in school. In all, there were 20 headteachers and 74 preschool teachers in the sample.

### 3.5 Research Instruments

Several research instruments have been used in this study to collect information. They include questionnaires, interview guides, observation checklist and document analysis.

### 3.5.1 Questionnaires

The questionnaires were administered to all teachers in the sampled pre-school institutions. The researcher assumed that every pre-school institution would have at least four teachers, giving a total of 80 respondents. But, in reality, some schools had less than four teachers. Where there were more than four teachers, all the teachers were given the questionnaires and then four were randomly selected for data extraction.

The questionnaires included both open- and close-ended questions. Open-ended questions were used to get views from the respondents while close ended questions were used to gather specific information. The information gathered related to the academic and professional qualifications of teachers, their experience, the nature of training received, the methods used in teaching and the challenges of teaching in pre-school institutions.

The use of questionnaires in the study was advantageous in that it collected information from many respondents within a limited time. The other advantage was that the respondents were free to give information on the study because the researcher assured them of anonymity. The questionnaires were delivered personally due to the fact that mailed ones often have poor returns, thus limiting the possibilities of drawing valid general conclusions. This was done during the month of September 1995.

### 3.5.2 Interviews

These were advantageous in the study because the interviewees had a chance to express themselves freely. The researcher could probe issues further and, through in-depth discussions, more information was obtained. The interviews were conducted in all the twenty sampled pre-school institutions. All the headteachers in the twenty sampled institutions were interviewed. The headteachers' interviews were structured and focused on:

Criteria used to select teachers for the respective schools;

- . The benefits teachers are entitled to, i.e. terms and conditions of service.
- . Problems encountered in the pre-schools (related to the teaching staff);
- . Role and duties of headteachers in pre-school institutions;
- . The teaching methods used in the pre-schools.

The interviews were conducted over a period of 45 minutes for each head of pre-school.

This was done in the headteachers' offices during the morning hours.

Although there was no intention at first to interview the teachers, every opportunity available was seized to conduct unstructured interviews with the teachers. The teachers were probed using the items in the questionnaire. This was done mainly during tea time, lunch time or during classroom observations when the children were doing their own work. This information was very helpful because it augmented the brief information in the questionnaires. Teachers were free to discuss the children, teaching-learning materials, their conditions and terms of service and the problems they encountered in their work.

### 3.5.3 Observation Checklist

Observations were made in the twenty sampled pre-school institutions in the following areas:-

#### a) The general environment of the school

The school was observed to obtain information on the physical facilities available in it. This was done early in the morning before lessons at 9.00, or in the afternoon, when there were no lessons taking place. Most headmistresses offered to take the researcher around the school. This offered an opportunity to solicit more information on the improvements needed in the school and to know how the availability or lack of certain

facilities hindered or fostered the progress of teachers' work in facilitating learning.

General observations focused on:

- . The condition of the school buildings;
- . The space available for play;
- . The playground and its facilities.

#### **b) Classroom Observation**

Although it would have been ideal for the researcher to observe all the classrooms, this was not possible due to time constraint. Therefore, indepth classroom observation was carried out in eight pre-school institutions, two from each category. The eight pre-school institutions were part of the twenty sampled institutions (40%). The classroom observations focused on:-

- Teaching Sessions
- Arrangements in the classrooms
- Teacher - Child interaction
- Methods of teaching.

The researcher was introduced to the class teachers and to the children by the headmistress every time she entered a new classroom. The necessary information was recorded on a checklist. At least two lessons were observed in every class and this was repeated twice.

#### **3.5.4 Document Analysis**

An analysis of class time-tables, children's work and teachers' records was made to determine whether the teachers adhered to allocated times for different subjects and whether they recorded children's progress.

### **a) Class Time Tables**

A time was set aside during the day to observe the class time tables. Time allocated to different subjects was observed and the teachers were also asked whether they adhered to it. This was to determine whether the teachers' training background had created in them the discipline to adhere to time tables and the rigidity that goes with it.

### **b) Children's Work**

This was checked during class time to see what teachers stress on, how children progress from one stage to another (from Nursery to Preunit) and the skills emphasized at different stages (e.g. reading, writing, drawing, modelling). This was done to determine whether the teachers' training fostered knowledge of helping children to progress from one stage to another.

### **c) Teachers' Records**

The records that were observed included their class registers, lesson plans and schemes of work and records on children's progress. The aim was to obtain information on the efficiency of teachers in the keeping of such records.

## **3.6 Piloting of Instruments**

This was carried out on a group of eight teachers and four heads of pre-school institutions in four pre-schools in Nairobi. This was done to ensure the validity of the instruments (i.e. the questionnaires and the interviews). Amendments were made on the instruments to make them clearer where they were ambiguous and to erase the questions that were found irrelevant to the study.

### 3.7 Data Analysis

1. L.G. The data gathered through the questionnaires, interviews and observation were analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively.

2. P. Foster, "Area Studies" in *History and Postcoloniality*, Do.Cit p.883.

3. *Ibid.*

Interview data were mainly qualitative because the study intended to solicit in-depth information pertaining to the quality of teachers in urban pre-school institutions. Qualitative data was, therefore, divided into groups and then coded. The codes which recurred were put together and then definitions to specify the properties associated with the core codes were developed. The links between the codes were identified and these were elaborated on in narrative form.<sup>11</sup>

6. L. K. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze quantitative data. The frequencies and percentages were worked out and the data tabulated. These were all done in a comparative way.

10. J. Okely, "Thinking through fieldwork" in A. Bryman and R. Burgess (eds) *Analyzing Qualitative Data* (London: Routledge, 1999) p.18.

### 3.8 Summary

11. Bryman and Burgess, "Patterns of Crisis Behaviour: A qualitative inquiry" in A. Bryman and R. Burgess.

The Chapter has outlined the research design and methodology used in the study. The sampling techniques and the research instruments used in the study have been discussed. The procedure for data analysis has also been discussed. The next Chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of the data obtained from fieldwork.

## Footnotes

1. L.G. Katz, "Early Childhood Education" In T. Husen and T. Postlethwaite (eds) International Encyclopedia of Education (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1985) p.1485.
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## CHAPTER 4

### DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

#### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the study whose aim was to investigate the professional qualities of teachers in urban pre-school institutions. This was done comparatively, with four categories of pre-school institutions offering the basis for comparison. These are: Church Sponsored (CS), Private (P), Self Help (SH) and City Council (CC) pre-school institutions. The study had the following four objectives to examine:

- a) Academic qualifications of pre-school teachers;
- b) Professional qualifications of pre-school teachers;
- c) Variations in the teaching methods being used in different categories of pre-school institutions;
- d) Variations in the physical facilities in the schools and the teachers' conditions and terms of service.

The Chapter is divided into four parts:-

- Part 4.1 - Presents, analyses and interprets the data concerning the background of the teachers: their age, gender and marital status.
- Part 4.2 - Presents, analyses and interprets the data on the academic and professional qualifications of teachers in a comparative perspective.
- Part 4.3 - Presents, analyses and interprets the results on the teaching methods used by different categories of pre-school institutions.

Part 4.4 - **AGE** Presents, analyses and interprets the data on the general quality of the pre-school institutions in terms of physical facilities, teaching-learning materials and conditions and terms of service for teachers in the different categories of pre-school institutions.

#### 4.1 - Background Information on Teachers

In this part, teachers' age, gender and marital status in the four categories of pre-school institutions is presented, analysed and discussed.

##### 4.1.1 Age

Table 4.1 shows that majority of the teachers are between ages 25 and 35 (43.2%). Most of the teachers in the CC category (35%) were between ages 36 and 45 while in the P category only one teacher (5.6%) was in this age bracket and 66.7% between ages 25 and 35. Commenting on the teachers' age, the headteachers of the P institutions said that young people were more preferable to them than elderly ones because they are more energetic and can dedicate their time to their work due to the fact that they are usually single and do not have family constraints.

Table 4.1 Age of the Respondents by Category

AGE	C A T E G O R Y									
	CC		P		SH		CS		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Below 25	2	10	4	22.2	2	12.5	4	20	12	16.2
25 - 35	6	30	12	66.7	4	25	10	50	32	43.2
36 - 45	7	35	1	5.6	8	50	4	20	20	27
46+	5	25	1	5.6	2	12.5	2	10	10	13.5
Total	20	100	18	100	16	100	20	100	74	100

The headteachers of the CC institutions attributed the age of their teachers to the institutions, which, they said, were equally old. Furthermore, they enjoyed other privileges like housing, maternity leave and retirement benefits. In the SH category, 50% of the teachers were in the age bracket of 36-45. This was also attributed to the fact that most of them enjoyed the same privileges as those of the CC schools, something that was not common with the P and CS institutions.

#### 4.1.2 Gender

Most of the teachers in all pre-school institutions in Nairobi (94.6%) are female. Table 4.2 presents the gender of the teachers in the pre-schools by category.

Table 4.2 Gender of Teachers in the Pre-Schools by Category

GENDER	C A T E G O R Y									
	CC		P		SH		CS		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Male	-	-	-	-	2	12.5	2	10	4	5.4
Female	20	100	18	100	14	87.5	18	90	70	94.6
Total	20	100	18	100	16	100	20	100	74	100

Table 4.2 shows that only 5.4% of the teachers in all the sampled pre-school institutions are male. Asked why they preferred working in a female-dominated environment, the male teachers answered that, apart from the fact that society viewed it as an odd job for a man to look after children, it was in itself very enjoyable. They added that men, being fathers, were also supposed to take it as their duty to be actively involved in child care programmes. One of the male teachers commented thus:

"I like working with children due to the innocence they portray. So long as you teach a child which way to go, he will find it easier to obey than would a grown up. Being with them is lots of fun."

The male teachers were united in the thought that it is necessary for more men to join the profession, since the days, when people thought that staying with children was totally a female affair, were long gone, and that, it was high time men changed their attitudes. Although they agreed that it was hard for the society to change its attitudes, time would still solve the problem.

### 4.1.3 Marital Status

Most of the pre-school teachers (60.8%) were married as Table 4.3 indicates. Majority in the P category were single (66.7%). Their headteachers said they preferred single teachers because they were hardly absent from school. The other headteachers did not attribute any significance to the marital status.

Table 4.3 Marital Status of Teachers in the Pre-schools by Category

Marital Status	C A T E G O R Y									
	CC		P		SH		CS		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Single	5	25	12	66.7	4	25	8	40	29	39.2
Married	15	75	6	33.3	12	75	12	60	45	60.8
Total	<u>20</u>	100	18	100	16	100	20	100	74	100

Only 33.3% of teachers in the P category are married while, in the CC category, 75% are married. The same percentage (75%) also applies to the SH category while, in the CS category, 60% are married.

From the foregoing, it is apparent that age and marital status are significant only in the P category. This could be attributed to the fact that the P schools are mainly business-oriented and, hence, teacher dedication is of great concern since any absence of a teacher for one reason or the other is seen to jeopardize business.

## 4.2 Teachers' academic and professional qualifications and experience

Data on teachers' academic and professional qualifications as well as experience were obtained from the teachers' questionnaires and from the interviews with the headteachers.

#### 4.2.1 Teachers' academic qualifications

From Table 4.4 we note that most of the pre-school teachers (64.9%) are KCE holders.

In the P category, 88.9% are KCE holders and the rest KCPE/KAPE holders.

Table 4.4 Teachers' Level of Education

LEVEL OF EDUCATION	CATEGORY									
	CC		P		SH		CS		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
KCPE or Equivalent	5	25	2	11.1	5	31	1	5	13	17.6
KCE	10	50	16	88.9	10	62.5	12	60	48	64.9
KACE	3	15					3	15	6	8.1
Diploma							2	10	2	2.7
Graduate										
Other	2	10			1	6.3	2	10	5	6.7
Total	20	100	18	100	16	100	20	100	74	100

Although in all the categories the majority of the teachers are KCE holders, there are some in the CC and CS categories with KACE and Diploma certificates. Those in the category of 'Other' are KJSE holders, found in CC, SH and CS categories.

It is evident from the foregoing that majority of teachers in urban pre-school institutions are KCE/KCSE holders. In the CC institutions, it is a prerequisite for one to be a KCSE certificate holder. But the headteachers said that there are also KJSE and KCPE certificate holders who were teaching in those institutions. These teachers had been employed earlier on, they added. Asked why the form-four leavers were preferable to them, all the headteachers said that it is because they can express themselves well in English, and, therefore, are able to use it as a medium of instruction.

A total of six teachers with KACE certificates (8.1%) were found in CC and CS schools.

Asked why they ended up teaching in pre-school institutions, one of them answered:

"It is very enjoyable to teach young children. If people realise this, even the highly learned ones will start working in pre-school institutions."

The three teachers with KACE certificates in the CS schools (15%) are in schools found in high income areas. Since the parents in these areas pay substantial amounts of school fees, the teachers are, consequently able to earn better salaries than the teachers in the CS schools found in the middle income and low income areas.

#### 4.2.2. Teachers' Professional Qualifications

Information on the teachers' professional qualifications was solicited through questionnaires, formal interviews with headteachers and informal interviews with teachers. Table 4.5 presents the responses to the question whether or not the teachers had any professional training.

Table 4.5 Teachers' responses on whether or not they had any professional training

Response	CATEGORY									
	CC		P		SH		CS		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Yes	19	95	12	66.7	8	50	17	85	56	75.7
No	-	-	1	5.6	4	25	-	-	5	6.6
On Training	1	5	5	27.8	4	25	3	15	13	17.6
Total	20	100	18	100	16	100	20	100	74	100

Table 4.5 indicates that most teachers (75.7%) had undergone some professional training. The CC category had the highest percentage (95%) while the SH category had the lowest (50%). Both the CC schools and the CS schools did not have any untrained teacher, although they had some undergoing training. The CC heads of schools commented that it was a requirement for them to be either trained or on training. Furthermore, most of their teachers had long experience and, therefore, had had a chance to be trained.

The largest number of those on training were from the P category (27.8%). During interviews with the headteachers, it was learnt that the headteachers preferred taking untrained teachers and, after observing them for some time, they would send them for training if these teachers showed interest in young children. Most of the P schools preferred sending their trainees to CICECE because training at CICECE was offered during school holidays and, thus, did not interfere with the teachers' work.

From the foregoing, it is evident that there is an increasing awareness of the need to train pre-school teachers. Only a negligible number (6.6%) were found not trained.

The duration of training for teachers varied as indicated in table 4.6.

Table 4.6 Teachers' duration of training (by category)

Duration	C A T E G O R Y									
	CC		P		SH		CS		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Less than 6 months	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	35.3	6	10.5
6-11 months	-	-	3	25	2	25	5	29.4	10	17.5
12-18 months	10	50	3	25	2	25	4	23.5	19	33.3
18+ months	10	50	6	50	4	50	2	11.8	22	38.6
Total	20	100	12	100	8	100	17	100	57	100

Table 4.6 indicates that most of the pre-school teachers (38.6%) had undergone training for 18 months and above. In the CS category, 6 teachers (35.3%) indicated that they had a training of less than 6 months. Asked whether training could actually take such a short duration, the headteachers in this category clarified that these teachers actually underwent in-service courses and seminars, which helped them in updating their skills, not really training per se.

Although the teachers in the CC category indicated that their training was either 12-18 months (50%) or 18+ months (50%), majority said that they did not know whether their training was 6 months or two years because they underwent the CICECE training which only took place during school holidays. Four heads of the CC schools out of five (80%) were of the view that the training was two years because the teachers were assessed even during the school days. But one headteacher (20%) insisted that this training was only 6 months because the teachers were seldom assessed during the school holidays.

Teachers were of the view that the duration of their training was very short and most of the times the three weeks ended before they learnt anything meaningful. They said that the training needed expansion both in duration and content. They said that although they were thoroughly prepared in teaching methods, they were lacking in knowledge concerning Child Psychology, which they felt was of paramount importance because it would help them in their daily encounter with children both in and outside the classroom.

The Montessori and KHA teachers underwent training for more than 2 years. Teachers trained in these two institutions said that they liked their training because it was rigorous and it prepared them adequately for their work. There was a lot of practical work, and, since it was a requirement for them to be attached to a pre-school institution, they learnt a lot during their teaching practice. Their programmes included both theory and practice. They learnt Child Psychology (age 0-6 years) and the History of Early Childhood Education, among others.

Although the Montessori and the KHA training was viewed as rigorous, most headteachers said that they preferred the teachers trained by CICECE. Asked why this was so, they gave the following reasons:

- a) Due to its simplicity, the CICECE training still remains the best for our children because, it is realistic in that it takes into consideration the environment of the Kenyan child.
- b) The methods of teaching learnt in the two institutions (KHA and Montessori) do not offer continuity for our children in Kenyan primary schools.
- c) It is hard for teachers from these two institutions (KHA and Montessori) to fit into many pre-school institutions due to their being expensive to hire and for being suited generally for very high cost schools.

Asked whether they thought training was important for pre-school teachers, the heads of the pre-schools agreed that it was. Table 4.7 summarizes the weight of the reasons given.

Table 4.7 Reasons Why Training is Important

Reasons	Number out of 20	%
1. It gives them a better perspective on how to handle children, i.e., to detect when the children have a problem and know how to deal with it, to be patient with the children, etc.	20	100
2. It helps teachers to know how to teach young children better, i.e., the preparation of lessons and materials for learning, the process of lessons, etc.	18	90
3. It promotes orderliness in teachers' work	16	80
4. By going through training for a career, it means a teacher accepted the career and is ready to be a professional in the area	13	65

Table 4.7 indicates that all headteachers (100%) viewed training as a tool for helping teachers understand children, thus giving them a chance to work with them better. Ninety percent (90%) of the headteachers viewed training as a means of helping teachers to improve their methods of teaching young children. Trained teachers were orderly according to 80% of the headteachers. To 65% of the headteachers, training was a seal to show that the teachers were ready for the profession and they had accepted it totally.

Despite being important for pre-school teachers, training was not viewed as the only necessity for a pre-school teacher. Most of the heads in the P category (80%) said that although training was important and that they considered it when recruiting teachers, the recruits had to be of a good personality, especially the quality of being very patient with children. One headteacher said:

"I do not refute the fact that training is very important. But one may be trained, yet may not be able to handle the children with the love and care they need. Other teachers may have undergone the training simply because they did not have an alternative, and this would easily affect their work considerably."

Thus, to this headteacher, it was more important to blend training and personal qualities than just training per se.

The CC heads of pre-schools said that since they had no say on the employment of teachers, it was hard for them to control their personality and monitor the teachers before they employed them. The best they could do was to talk to the teachers and show them the need for being kind to children. Some headteachers in the SH and CS categories had the power to interview and employ teachers and, therefore, had the chance to consider the teachers' personality.

The headteachers in the Montessori schools said they did not employ teachers who were not trained in Montessori colleges. They said that since theirs was a highly specialized method, only those teachers who had been trained in the method would handle their classes. Other headteachers

said that they did not like the teachers who had graduated from Homecraft Centres. One headteacher commented thus:

"It is not fair to assume that if someone is trained in Homecraft skills (knitting, child care, etc.,) then she/he can teach young children. This is a misconception because these teachers emphasize more of home science (washing hands before eating, body cleanliness etc.) instead of reading, writing and arithmetic. I don't accept these teachers in my school."

Thus, it is evident that although training was considered an important factor for a pre-school teacher, there were certain preferences for different pre-schools, e.g., the kind of training the teacher received, and the personality of the teacher.

The CC category headteachers said that those teachers on training were not given full responsibilities of handling a class but were attached to trained teachers so that they could receive guidance from them.

When the headteachers were asked whether they noticed any difference between the trained and untrained teachers, they all replied that there was a big difference because the untrained ones tended to escape from children's problems instead of dealing with them squarely. The untrained also did not know how to deal with different age groups since they did not know what tasks to give which groups of children. One headteacher summarized it by saying:

"It is not easy for an untrained teacher to deal with pre-school children. It is easier for an untrained teacher to work in high school than in a pre-school institution. But I'm glad the number of untrained pre-school teachers is dwindling."

The teachers confirmed the headteachers' feelings when they indicated that they appreciated the training they had received; it had gone a long way in boosting their teaching skills.

Those who had started teaching before they were trained said that there was hardly any comparison between their pre-and post-training teaching skills. They asserted that before they were trained they could not prepare their lessons adequately, they did not know how to deal with children's problems and they could get easily irritated. But, after training, they found themselves more productive since they could understand children better.

From these results, it is clear that training is viewed as very important for pre-school teachers. In addition to training, a teacher's personality is viewed, especially by the heads of pre-schools in the P category, to be important for a pre-school teacher. This confirms an earlier report<sup>1</sup> by the IDRC on the importance of training and the positive attitude towards teaching, where the two attributes were found to be of help to the teacher.

The results of this study also show that teachers are of the view that the training curriculum should be improved to include subjects like child psychology, this to help the teachers understand children better. Teachers indicated that proper training was important to help teachers cope with the competitive nature of the school system. The headteachers indicated that more and more children were being admitted in the pre-school institutions and, therefore, teachers needed to be competent enough.

Regarding the question why preschool attendance was gaining importance prior to Standard 1 admission, the headteachers said it was mainly because pre-school exposure prepared pupils for primary school life, both educationally and socially. All the headteachers interviewed felt that the main task of pre-school institutions was to prepare children for the tough interviews that they were to face before being admitted into Standard 1. Those headteachers in the P category were quick to comment that although they put academic excellence first, it was not supposed to be the case:

"But we have no choice. If we do not teach them properly and they don't make it in the interviews, we are in for trouble with the parents. This means no children for us the following year. So we have to teach."

But the headteachers from the CC category strongly felt that it was in itself wrong to give children interviews before admission to Standard 1. To them, pre-school children were supposed to be given a chance to prove themselves since academic excellence was not supposed to be the aim of pre-school institutions; social values, on the contrary, were considered more important. One of them commented thus:

"The fact that a child can obey is in itself learning. The fact that a child can respect a teacher, e.g., ask for permission when he/she wants to go out, is in itself learning. These interviews are no good."

Thus, from the foregoing, it is evident that although the headteachers of the P schools were for the idea of preparing children for interviews, those of the CC category highly discouraged this. This could be attributed to the fact that the P schools mainly adhered to parental demands due to their nature (i.e. business orientation) while the CC schools had a set of rules from the ministry, concerning pre-school education; they have to adhere closely to these rules. Most of the SH headteachers were of the same opinion as that of the CC heads; the opinion of the CS headteachers varied from school to school, depending on the methods they used<sup>2</sup>

#### 4.2.3 Teachers' Working Experience

Teachers' working experience is used here to mean the number of years a teacher has taught in pre-school institutions. According to Katz, the longer a teacher teaches in pre-school institutions, the more she/he gets used to the children and the more she/he enjoys her/his work<sup>3</sup>. After the first five years, a teacher reaches the stage of maturity and would want to participate

in activities that would make him/her grow in her profession. Table 4.8 shows the number of years the teachers in our study have taught in pre-school institutions.

We observe from the table that 50% of teachers in the CC category have taught for more than 16 years in pre-school institutions. In the P category, only 11.1% have taught for 16 years and above. Similarly, 12.5% of those in the SH category and 15% of those in the CS category have taught for 16 years and above. The largest number of those in the P category (55.6%) had taught for less than five years.

It is clear from the table that the greatest number of the preschool teachers (31.1%) had served in pre-school institutions for less than five years. An analysis of the data pointed out that most teachers in the P category were young and single, and such was also the case that more than half of them (55.6%) had an experience of less than five years. As to the reasons for this, the P heads pointed out that experience was not a matter of concern because they as a teacher was interested in children and was happy and confident to start working with them. If neither, there was no problem.

But the teachers had different concerns on this issue. They explained that it was hard for them to stay in those preschools for long because they were not remunerated properly, although they were being overworked. Apart from the working atmosphere being not very relaxed, one's job was also not secure.

The CC category teachers had a longer experience than those in the rest of the categories because of what the teachers termed as a permanent employment, with allowances, and other benefits. Most of these schools are equally very old and hence, have a lot of experienced young teachers who started teaching much earlier.

The largest number of the teachers in the CS category (40%) were those who had less than five years. This was attributed to the same reasons applying to the P category. In contrast, most of

Table 4.8 Experience of Teachers in Pre-school Institutions by category

No. of Years	C A T E G O R Y									
	CC		P		SH		CS		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Less than 5 years	3	15	10	55.6	2	12.5	8	40	23	31.1
5-10	3	15	6	33.3	5	31.3	4	20	18	24.3
11-15	4	20	-	-	7	43.8	5	25	16	21.6
16+	10	50	2	11.1	2	12.5	3	15	17	23
Total	20	100	18	100	16	100	20	100	74	100

It is clear from the table that the greatest number of the pre-school teachers (31.1%) had served in pre-school institutions for less than 5 years. An earlier discussion pointed out that most teachers in the P category were young and single<sup>4</sup>, and, table 4.8 also indicates that more than half of them (55.6%) had an experience of less than five years. Asked to comment on this, the P heads pointed out that experience was not a matter of concern because as long as a teacher was interested in children and was trained well on-the-job to know what was expected of him/her, there was no problem.

But the teachers had different concerns on this issue. They indicated that it was hard for them to stay in those pre-schools for long because they were not remunerated properly, although they were being overworked. Apart from the working atmosphere being not very relaxed, one's job was also not secure.

The CC category teachers had a longer experience than those in the rest of the categories because of what the teachers termed as a permanent employment, with allowance, and retirement benefits. Most of these schools are equally very old and, hence, have a likelihood of having teachers who started teaching much earlier.

The largest number of the teachers in the CS category (40%) had also served for less than five years. This was attributed to the same reasons applying to the P category because most of

the CS schools are run the same way as the P schools in most aspects, e.g., remuneration. Table 4.9 below confirms that majority of teachers in these two categories (44.4% in P and 45% in CS) had taught in the same institution for less than 5 years.

Table 4.9 Number of years teachers have taught in the same institution

No. of Years	C A T E G O R Y									
	CC		P		SH		CS		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Less than 5 years	3	15	8	44.4	6	37.5	9	45	26	35.1
5 - 10	4	20	6	33.3	6	37.5	-	-	16	21.6
11 - 15	6	30	2	11.1	-	-	6	30	14	18.9
16+	7	35	2	11.1	4	25	5	25	18	24.3
Total	20	100	18	100	16	100	20	100	74	100

Whereas in three categories (P, SH, CS), the greatest number of the teachers had respectively taught for less than five years in the same institution, in the CC category, the greatest number of the teachers (35%) had taught in the same school for 16 years and above. The long service given in the same school, as in the CC schools, may be attributed to job security and terminal benefits, factors that are absent in the other categories. Although the CC teachers are sometimes transferred to other schools, this is rare and it can only happen on request, or whenever another school is understaffed.

Katz<sup>5</sup> states that pre-school teachers need constant retraining in their profession. Information was sought on whether or not pre-school teachers attended seminars or workshops to upgrade their skills. Table 4.10 shows their responses.

Table 4.10 Responses of teachers on whether or not they had attended seminars

RESPONSE	C A T E G O R Y									
	CC		SH		P		CS		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
YES	17	85	6	37.5	6	33.3	11	55	40	54
NO	3	15	10	62.5	12	66.7	9	45	34	46
TOTAL	20	100	16	100	18	100	20	100	74	100

The table shows that majority of the teachers (54%) had attended seminars. A large number, though, (46%) had not attended. However, most of the teachers indicated that the seminars were no longer very useful to them because the themes were repetitive. Most of the time they were taught how to make more attractive materials for children, as table 4.11 shows.

#### 4.3 Teaching Methods

In this part, data on the teaching methods employed by teachers in the four categories of pre-school institutions is presented, analyzed and discussed. The results were obtained through questionnaires, interviews and classroom observations. The methods used in the pre-schools were influenced by two factors:

- i) The type of training received by teachers in the school.
- ii) the expectations of the owners or sponsors of the pre-school. The owners of pre-school children ought to have by the end of their life to

Table 4.11 Themes of Seminars/Workshops according to teachers

Theme	N=40	%
1. Making useful and attractive learning materials for children	30	75
2. Understanding pre-school children	10	25
3. Fundamentals of Child Care (e.g Dental care, first aid, hygiene)	8	20
4. Improving teaching skills	6	15
5. Developing play and creative activities	3	7.5
6. Child Development	3	7.5
7. Music, Art & Craft	1	2.5
8. Feeding programmes and their importance	1	2.5

The teachers were of the view that the themes of the seminars could be more diversified so that, instead of learning more about the materials, they could be provided with more sessions on Child Development theory and teaching skills. This could be more practical to them because they had already learnt a lot in college regarding development of materials.

### 4.3 Teaching Methods

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- i) The type of training received by teachers in the school,
- ii) the expectations of the owners or sponsors of the pre-schools regarding what pre-school children ought to achieve by the end of their last term in pre-school.

These two factors affect the school programmes. The teachers and sponsors are, therefore, clear on which methods to use in order to give to children what they perceived as the best.

Teachers used certain methods of teaching either as it was dictated by the school owners or sponsors or as per the training they received or both. In schools that followed the Montessori programme, only teachers trained in Montessori colleges could be considered for teaching there. Most of the schools that did not use the Montessori programme took teachers trained in other methods but would either let them use what they had learnt or train them on-the-job for what they expected.

There were two most common methods encountered in the study: the Montessori Method and the Activity/Ministry method<sup>6</sup>.

#### 4.3.1 Teaching Methods as used by the four categories of pre-school Institutions

Pre-school institutions in Nairobi used different teaching methods for teaching as indicated by Table 4.12.

The KHA method is not very different from the activity method in that children are seen to learn best through play and activities which are used to achieve learning. But emphasis stresses on understanding the child and catering for his/her individual needs.

The most notable difference between the KHA method and the activity method is the training offered to the teachers in terms of duration. While KHA is a three year training method training is a two year course. Teachers trained in KHA method are trained in only one while the Activity Method has many colleges (DICECS) in Nairobi.

Table 4.12 Teaching methods used by teachers in the pre-schools (by category)

Method	C A T E G O R Y									
	CC		SH		P		CS		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Activity/ Ministry	20	100	16	100	10	55.6	10	50	56	75.7
Montessori	-	-	-	-	3	16.7	7	35	10	13.5
K.H.A	-	-	-	-	5	27.8	3	15	8	10.8
Total	20	100	16	100	18	100	20	100	74	100

According to the table, all the teachers (100%) in CC and SH categories used the activity method. Fifty five point six (55.6%) of teachers in the P category and 50% in the CS category used the same method. The Montessori method was used by 16.7% of the P teachers and 35% of the CS teachers.

The most widely used method, therefore, is the activity method and is wholly used in the CC and SH categories. More than half of the teachers in the other two categories also used the activity method.

The KHA method is not very different from the activity method in that children are seen to learn best through play; and attractive materials are used to enhance learning. The method stresses on understanding the child and catering for his/her individual needs.

The most notable difference between the KHA method and the activity method is the training offered to the teachers in terms of duration. While KHA is a three year course, the Activity method training is a two year course. Teachers trained in KHA method are fewer since the college is only one while the Activity Method has many colleges (DICECEs) in every district.

Table 4. When teachers were asked why they used particular methods, they had different reasons.

Table 4.13 shows the reasons given by the teachers who used the activity method.

Table 4.13 Reasons why teachers used the Activity/Ministry method

REASON	N=	%
1. It is easier for both the teacher and the children to understand; the children are therefore able to learn quickly since they learn by doing	40	71.4
2. It creates interest in young children and thus makes them discover things by themselves, especially through play	10	17.9
3. Through this method, children learn how to be social and how to share because they are given a chance to interact	10	17.9
4. Through the use of this method, it is easier for teachers to prepare children's work	9	16.1
5. It is the method we were taught in college.	4	7.1

Table 4.13 indicates that most of the teachers (71.4%) who used the Activity method did this because it was easier to understand and, therefore, children were able to learn quickly since they learnt by doing. Others (17.9%) said that the method created interest in young children and, therefore, made them discover things by themselves, especially through play. Another 17.9% also indicated that, through this method, children were able to learn how to be social and how to share things because they were given a chance to interact. A small fraction of the teachers (7.1%) indicated that they used the method simply because it was the one they were taught and, thus, they were not familiar with any other.

The Teachers who used the KHA method had reasons similar to those who used the activity method because the two methods did not have any practical differences.

The small percentage of teachers (13.5%) who used the Montessori method had their own reasons as to why they used the method, as table 4.14 shows.

Table 4.14 Reasons why teachers used the Montessori Method

REASON	N=10	%
1. Helps children to be independent	10	100
2. Children learn practically by doing, and this makes it useful for their future life	8	80
3. It caters for individual differences	6	60
4. It promotes orderliness and discipline amongst children	6	60

From the above table, all the teachers who used the Montessori Method (100%) perceived it as promoting independent spirit in children. Eighty percent (80%) of them found it important because children could learn practically by doing and, therefore, it was useful even for their future life. Sixty percent (60%) of the teachers found it important for catering for individual difference. Another 60% felt that it promoted orderliness and discipline amongst children.

This researcher confirmed, through classroom observation, the reasons given by the teachers as to why they used the methods. It was noted that in the schools where the activity method was used, children were free to talk to their teachers and friends as the class went on. There were no reprimands from teachers and children learnt most of the things through singing. During a Mathematics class, children could be heard singing a song like:

"I am number one, I have come to dance,  
Dance in the middle, And then I run away.  
I am number two.....  
I am number three ...."

According to most teachers, this kind of learning was good because it kept the child's interest burning and most of the times the child could learn more because she/he equated learning to play. Thus the children could not be easily tensed up and this made learning easier in a more relaxed atmosphere.

Each time the researcher was always introduced to the class, the children were always happy to have a new teacher. They were always eager to sing a song or recite a poem to the

researcher. They would freely interact with their teacher and the researcher as learning went on. Silence was not emphasized. Asked why they allowed children to make noise, one teacher replied that the children's noise was considered orderly noise because through that noise, they were learning. By consulting each other, they were not only asking one another for the correct answers but they were also socializing.

Thus, the teachers' sentiments about the importance of the activity/ministry method were confirmed through the classroom observations and it was found that children were actually able to socialize and enjoy their learning. Thus, learning through the activity method, the environment can be said to be teacher/pupil-centred where the teacher has his/her part to play and the children, their part.

In the Montessori schools, the scenario was different. Two pure Montessori schools were used in the study (both of them in the CS category, sponsored by the Catholic church). The third school, a P school, was not using Montessori wholly, but for the beginners only (otherwise known as the baby or reception class).

Silence was strongly stressed in these schools, to the extent that, whenever a child made a noise, she/he was scolded by the teacher. In both schools, learning took place in a hall where children were divided into groups according to their ability. No noise could be heard from any corner of these halls. Children went about their work individually and silently. Children used many materials which were placed on mats on the floor. Teachers hardly talked. This method was, therefore, more child-oriented than teacher-oriented. It followed the Montessori principle of a teacher being 'a directress'. The teachers only directed children on what to do next and orders like "silence, hands down, straight line" were prevalent.

The time tables of the Montessori schools were adhered to very strictly. Children would work with the set materials and so long as one did not finish his/her work, there would be no

permission to either take porridge or move to the next step. If a child, for example, wanted to go out, the teacher had to check his/her work first before being allowed out.

The Montessori programme consisted of a session on 'basic training' where children were taught daily living skills and manners like greetings, saying 'thank you', asking for permission and even how to handle things, e.g., how to carry a chair, how to carry a mat, etc. When one child did not carry a mat the conventional way, the teacher told him, "put it down and carry it the way it is supposed to be carried."

The Montessori teachers found it very positive for children to be treated this way. They said that children needed this kind of upbringing for a bright future:

"They need to be disciplined. If we do not teach them this, who will do it? In fact parents admire our way of teaching. It's the best."

The Montessori schools had very many children compared to the others. The headteachers gave two reasons as to why this was so.

- a) Children were taught how to read and write. By the time they left for Standard 1, they were able to read practically any English word and write neatly in their books. They would also have mastered miscellaneous ideas like the continents of the world, the countries of Africa, the provinces of Kenya and sometimes even the Presidents of the various countries of the world.
- b) Discipline was inculcated in the children in such a way that by the time they were leaving for Standard 1, they knew what was expected of them.

The Activity Method, the headteachers said, did not cater for today's competitive nature of the school system because:

- a) Children were not taught any social skills since they did not have a session on 'basic skill training'. They also did not use the materials recommended by

Montessori which helped the child even in sensorial skills, i.e., sight, holding things, etc.

- b) Children were not shown any seriousness of their work since they spent so much time making noise and playing; so by the time they left the nursery school, they were not as competent in reading, writing and arithmetic as those who went through the Montessori schools.

Although the Montessori teachers supported their method, the large number in their schools could be attributed to the fees they charge, which is not so high, given that they are Church sponsored schools. Again, the lessons take place in the church and, therefore, there is always space for another child. Parents would also prefer taking their children to a nursery school in the Church where they worship.

According to the early educators, children are supposed to be set free. They are not supposed to have a programmed style of learning, and most of their time should be spent in play. By being denied play in the Montessori method, the child's instincts are being suppressed. Discipline need not be equated with silence and work. The children in these schools were thus found not to be cheerful as those in other schools because they are required to do things beyond their age.

One P school used the Montessori Method for beginners and the Activity Method for the pre-unit class. The headmistress of this school said that the Montessori Method was good for introduction because children were able to master the reading and arithmetic very fast through the materials they used. The Activity Method was appropriate later because it offered continuity to the syllabus of Standard 1.

The teachers in the P schools using a blend of the Montessori and Activity Methods said that they did so because, in each of the methods, there was certainly something positive; therefore, to use one or the other exclusively would be to deprive the children of something. For example,

even though the Montessori Method did not emphasize outdoor play, there was in it the teaching of discipline as well as reading and writing; children learn to make attractive materials and keep them clean. Thus a blend of the two would be the most ideal for the Kenyan child.

Teachers who did not use the Montessori method stood strongly against it. One headteacher in the CC category attributed to this method the constant poor performance of children in Nairobi primary schools. She said that she had received reports from primary school teachers that children who went through the Montessori schools dropped in performance, especially after Standard three, because, when they went to the primary school, they relaxed due to the fact that they had already learnt most of the things in nursery schools.

Table 4.15 summarizes the reasons why teachers who did not use the Montessori method felt it was not good.

Table 4.15 Reasons why Teachers felt Montessori was not a good method

REASON		N=56	%
1.	Montessori overloads the children more than their ability can allow; thus they get confused later on in life since they are forced to grow before their due time	56	100
2.	Montessori is very expensive because of the type of materials required. It is for high class people and was actually designed for Europeans.	50	89.3
3.	Children who are taught through Montessori can be social misfits since individual work is stressed, thus minimizing socialization.	30	53.6
4.	It can hardly work in Kenya because it is ideal for smaller classes.	20	35.7

From the table, the concern of all the teachers (100%) who do not use the Montessori method was the fact that the method overloaded children beyond the capacity of their age.

Other reasons included the fact that the method was expensive (89.3%), that children had a risk of being social misfits (53.6%), and that it was only ideal for smaller classes, a goal which would be hard to achieve in Kenya with the growing population (35.7%).

The above reasons may be used to discredit the Montessori method; however, it still grows in popularity and the enrolled numbers are increasing in these schools day by day. The Montessori teachers maintain that it is necessary for children to know certain facts in the pre-school because nowadays the entire school system is very demanding. But the critique of the non-Montessori teachers still hold water in the sense that children at that tender age need not be taught too much at the expense of their growing and socialization. The criticisms expressed above are similar to what was advanced by L.R. Williams<sup>7</sup> where the method was criticized for its high degree of structure in the prepared environment, thus, hampering children's creativity and emotional development, and for not promoting co-operation and imitative play.

Thus, it is evident that different pre-schools in Nairobi use the two methods, singly or by combination or both. The Montessori method was prevalent in the CS schools<sup>8</sup>. The CC and the SH schools wholly use the Activity Method while the P schools use a blend of the two methods, depending on the school programs set by the sponsors. Teachers perceived the method they used as the best and discredited the alternative method. Those who used a blend of the methods perceived each one of them as having some merit. Certain notable differences were, however, observed in the two methods as indicated by table 4.16 below.

Table 4.16 Differences between the Activity and the Montessori Methods

Activity	Montessori
1. The child is free to play with materials as well as through singing and interacting with others.	The use of materials is structured and silence is stressed. Children work individually.
2. Teachers are free to collect all sorts of materials as long as they are safe for children and relevant to their environment.	There is a particular set of materials which teachers develop during their training in college. The same materials are used every day with no variation.
3. Children progress from one stage to another, first by age and then by ability and interests.	Children are grouped by ability and not by age.

The fact that play is not emphasized in the Montessori method emanates from Montessori's principle that children prefer work to play<sup>9</sup>. The use of the same materials is also derived from her principle that they love order and they enjoy especially repetition of actions that they have already mastered<sup>10</sup>.

The above findings reveal that, although most of the early educators did not advocate for it, structured learning is going on in pre-school institutions and children are being taught in a prepared environment instead of being let to learn naturally<sup>11</sup>.

It is evident, though, that the Montessori and the Activity Methods can make a viable blend since there are positive elements in both. The Montessori method can borrow from the Activity Method the idea of letting children be free and relaxed in their learning environment. The Activity Method can also borrow from the Montessori Method the teaching of basic skills, albeit on a small scale. In this way, the two methods can go a long way in complementing ECE in Kenya. This has to be confirmed practical because there are teachers in Kenya who use both methods with a lot of success.

The variations in the teaching methods have a bearing on pre-school children's future education. After the pre-school, children mix in Standard One from different kinds of pre-school institutions. If they were already taught some topics in pre-school, they will be less enthusiastic.

If they were not, they are likely to be more enthusiastic to learn new things. Thus the gross variations in preschool learning are likely to affect the future learning of children in the primary school and beyond. Teachers need, therefore, to be trained the same way regarding the methods used for ECE in Kenya.

#### 4.4 The quality of Pre-school Institutions and Teachers' Conditions and Terms of Service

This part presents, analyzes and discusses data on the quality of pre-school institutions in terms of:

- (i) The physical facilities
- (ii) The teaching-learning materials available in the four categories of pre-school institutions
- (iii) Teachers' conditions and terms of service.

The status of physical facilities in a school is important because it may ease or make a teacher's work difficult<sup>12</sup>. Thus, a trained teacher may find it difficult to execute his/her duties if the facilities are not adequate.

The teaching-learning materials assist the teacher and the children in the learning process in the classroom. These include items such as textbooks, manilla papers, wall charts etc. The presence of these materials in a pre-school institution assists the teacher in planning for learning activities and helps the child to learn better. Thus, training and experience are both supported by adequate teaching, learning materials in any school.

Research shows that training alone does not make a teacher effective but also the conditions and terms of service. A World Bank study on teacher satisfaction and dissatisfaction indicated that higher paid teachers possessed higher language and instructional skills, raising

students' achievement<sup>13</sup>. Thus, the professional qualities of a teacher are likely to be affected by the remuneration.

#### 4.4.1 Status of Physical facilities in the Pre-school institutions

Data on the status of physical facilities in the pre-school institutions were mainly obtained through observation. A checklist was used for this purpose. In the checklist, resources in the classroom and outside the classroom were included e.g. playground, swings, ropes, puzzles, state of the buildings etc. The researcher marked accordingly what was available, not available or not adequate on the checklist.

Table 4.17 shows the responses of the teachers on the status of the physical facilities in their schools.

The results of the observation showed that 45% of the physical facilities in their pre-school institutions were adequate. The rest (45%) indicated that they were fairly adequate. None in this category indicated inadequacy of the physical facilities. In the P category, 27.8% indicated that the physical facilities were adequate while 72.2% indicated that they were fairly adequate. In the SH category, 37.5% of teachers said that the facilities were fairly adequate while 62.5% said that they were not adequate. In the CC category, 30% of the teachers said that the facilities were adequate, 35% said that they were fairly adequate while another 35% said that they were not adequate. In general, majority of the teachers (47.3%) indicated that the physical facilities in their schools were fairly adequate.

The results of observation confirmed the above results. The researcher noted that most CC schools were well equipped with spacious kitchens, toilets and classrooms. In most instances the buildings were neat and clean. Tables and chairs for children were designed specifically for them, small enough for the children to reach the tables during eating.

An interview with the headteachers revealed that the CC schools were well maintained because the City Council always sent technicians to rectify any defect in the facilities from time to time. They also said that even though the school fees were paid to the City Council, the

Table 4.17 Teachers' responses on the Status of Physical Facilities in the Pre-schools by Category.

STATUS	C A T E G O R Y									
	CC		P		SH		CS		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Adequate	11	55	5	27.8	-	-	6	30	22	29.7
Fairly Adequate	9	45	13	72.2	6	37.5	7	35	35	47.3
Not Adequate	-	-	-	-	10	62.5	7	35	17	23
Total	20	100	18	100	16	100	20	100	74	100

Table 4.17 indicates that more than half of the teachers in the CC category (55%) responded that the physical facilities in their pre-school institutions were adequate. The rest (45%) indicated that they were fairly adequate. None in this category indicated inadequacy of the physical facilities. In the P category, 27.8% indicated that the physical facilities were adequate while 72.2% indicated that they were fairly adequate. In the SH category, 37.5% of teachers said that the facilities were fairly adequate while 62.5% said that they were not adequate. In the CS category, 30% of the teachers said that the facilities were adequate, 35% said that they were fairly adequate while another 35% said that they were not adequate. In general, majority of the teachers (47.3%) indicated that the physical facilities in their schools were fairly adequate.

The results of observation confirmed the above results. The researcher noted that most CC schools were well equipped with spacious kitchens, toilets and classrooms. In most instances the buildings were neat and clean. Tables and chairs for children were designed specifically for them, small enough for the children to reach the tables during writing.

An interview with the headteachers revealed that the CC schools were well maintained because the City Council always sent technicians to rectify any defect in the facilities from time to time. They also said that even though the school fees was paid to the City Council, the

headteachers were allowed to receive the P.T.A fund which they were supposed to use for the improvement of the schools. That money, they added, was the one that helped them a lot in improving the physical appearance of the schools. In two of the CC schools visited, there were attractive paintings on the walls.

Most teachers in the P schools indicated that the physical facilities were fairly adequate. The headteachers said that what they lacked most was space for expansion, otherwise they were willing to do their best. Observation revealed that, in all the five schools, learning was taking place within some former residential houses. Some classes, therefore, were smaller than others, thus squeezed. Tables and chairs were designed for small children.

In the SH category, teachers lamented the inadequacy of the physical facilities. They said that they could hardly execute their role well because the classes were overcrowded and, in most cases, the desks were too high for the children. When the headteachers were asked the reason for such phenomena, they cited two reasons:

- a) Their schools were designed to help the children in the community and, therefore, it was hard for them to stop enrolling children for lack of space.
- b) There were no funds to improve the schools since children paid very low fees and the sponsors (either institutions or the community's appointed committee) left everything to the schools and expected them to be run with the little funds available.

These two factors made it hard for the SH schools to operate like other schools. Given that most of them were found in middle class and low class areas, it was hard to generate funds from parents.

In the CS category, there was a difference in the physical facilities according to the socio-economic status of the areas where the schools are found. The CS schools in the high class and middle class areas are better equipped when compared to those in the low class and slum areas.

Most of the CS schools in the high class and middle class areas are run like private pre-schools; parents are always ready to sponsor any activity for the improvement of the schools. But those schools in the low class and slum areas depend wholly on the church as well as the little fees collected from parents.

One headteacher in one CS school in a slum area decried the situation, saying that, if only the funds from foreign donors (churches) were used well for the welfare of the school, the situation would be much better. This particular school notably missed most of the facilities; there was only one teacher, and the children were supposed to be divided into different groups in the same classroom. Sanitation was poor and the children occasionally missed food to eat.

The play facilities were a matter of concern in all the categories of pre-school institutions, although the P schools took the lead in having adequate play facilities as table 4.18 shows.

Although the CC schools generally had good physical facilities, the play facilities were fairly adequate and needed improvement. Some swings were broken down and had not been repaired for a long time. When the headteachers were asked to comment on this, they said that playing materials were very important for children and any child who was denied the opportunity to play stood a high chance of being dull in class. They said they had requested for the broken down swings and slides to be rectified but no action had been taken.

In the P category, the play facilities were many and of good quality. The headteachers attributed this to parents' cooperation whenever they were asked for assistance.

Table 4.18 Status of Play Facilities (by category)

FACILITY	C A T E G O R Y			
	CC	P	SH	CS
Play-ground	A	B	A	B
Swings	B	A	B	B
Jumping ropes	B	A	C	B
Tyres	A	A	B	C
Slides	B	A	C	B
Balls	B	A	B	C

Key

- A - Adequate
- B - Fairly adequate
- C - Not adequate

Since most private schools were in High class estates, the fees were high and parents could also afford donations to the schools whenever they were requested. The only major problem was space for the play-ground in most of the P schools. This is mainly because most of them are situated on very small pieces of land, such that every available space is utilized, mainly for the classrooms and other facilities.

The SH schools had adequate play-grounds with lots of space. But they lacked most of the play facilities. Some did not exist at all while others were fairly adequate. This meant that children could not play some games and they could at best share what was available. The headteachers said that it was hard for them to generate funds to buy the play facilities because the institutions they were attached to hardly supported them, as they expected parents to act. Since most parents could not afford anything extra and the fees were so low, the situation persisted, as it were.

Some of the CS schools were Montessori; they did not believe in play, especially, outdoor play. Thus, these schools (40%), were totally lacking play facilities outside the classrooms. This is in accordance with Maria Montessori's principle, that "children prefer work to play and prefer didactic materials to toys".<sup>14</sup>

All teachers and headteachers except those in the Montessori schools, were of the view that the play facilities be improved for them to be able to execute their role of safeguarding the child's right to play<sup>15</sup>. They said that as long as the facilities remained inadequate, children would not be enjoying themselves to the maximum, and the teachers would fail in their duty. This need is demonstrated by the P schools who try their best, despite the lack of space, to provide play facilities of different types.

It is, therefore, evident from the above, that the importance attached by teachers to play facilities is a boost to professional quality in that, with adequate facilities, they are able to give children the services they need. For children to learn better in class, they need refreshing moments of play through different types of facilities.

For a teacher to manage his/her work well in a pre-school institution she/he, needs a manageable number of children. If the children are very many, the teacher may not be able to give them the attention they need. Given that some schools have small classrooms, with many pupils in them, teachers were asked how they cope with the big numbers. They replied that it was not easy. Table 4.19 shows the number of children in each class by category.

Table 4.19 Number of children in a class (by category)

Number	C A T E G O R Y									
	CC		P		SH		CS		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Below 30	20	100	13	72.2	5	31.3	14	70	52	70.3
31 - 40	-	-	1	5.6	4	25	5	25	10	13.5
41 - 50	-	-	4	22.2	4	25	1	5	9	12.2
51+	-	-	-	-	3	18.8	-	-	3	4.1
Total	20	100	18	100	16	100	20	100	74	100

According to the table, all the pre-school teachers in the CC category indicated that they had less than 30 children in their classes. During observation, the researcher noted that most of their classes had very few children, ranging from 15-20. The teachers said that this was good for them because they could attend to each child individually, and since the classrooms were also spacious, they could ensure that they attended to each child's individual needs.

Although the CC teachers were of the view that small numbers were good, they still admitted that the number of children in their schools were dwindling at a very high rate. The headteachers were asked to comment on this and all of them (100%) admitted that it was so because of two major reasons:

- a) There are very many schools in Nairobi and most of them are very near each other. Therefore, children tend to spread out to these schools.
- b) The CC schools are having fewer children nowadays because parents prefer expensive P schools, where they believe the best is offered. Since the CC schools do not believe in rushing children beyond their capacity, parents do not have confidence in them; they believe that children go to CC schools only to sing and dance, thus gaining nothing academic by the end of the day.

The headteachers were of the view that parents should be educated on what was the best for their children because most of the parents were simply being 'robbed' of their money and yet the children were not given the best as they (parents) expect. The headteachers added that whether the number of their children dwindled day by day, they would not change their views to please parents and hurt the children.

This lack of confidence in the CC schools by parents can be attributed to the competitive school system. Children are required to have known a lot by the time they get to Standard One; this is shown during the interviews for Standard 1 entry. The CC schools are opposed to excessive teaching in pre-school institutions.

In the P category, 72.2% of the teachers indicated that they had less than 30 children. However, they felt that it was still a large number because the classrooms were small and squeezed. Most of them had between 25 and 29 children, a number they considered too large for a pre-school class. The headteachers were also of the same opinion; to them, an ideal pre-school class should have 15-20 children. They added nevertheless, that this was impractical because many children were in need of joining pre-school institutions whereas the places were few, even though many pre-school institutions are mushrooming everywhere.

In the SH category, 31.3% of the classes had less than 30 children. The rest had 31 and above. Eighteen point eight (18.8%) of them had 51 and above, a number which they considered too high to manage. Having this number was disadvantageous in that it was very easy for the teacher to ignore some children. Teachers were also not able to plan their work well in the situation of a large number of children.

Majority of the CS teachers (70%) indicated that they had less than 30 children. Only 5% indicated that they had 41-50 children. Thus, the teacher-child ratio in most of the CS schools was manageable according to the teachers.

From the foregoing, it is evident that the adequacy or inadequacy of physical facilities affect the performance of the teacher. Similarly, when the play materials are lacking or inadequate, the teacher may not be able to help the child professionally in learning. When the child does not play, he/she may be dull in the classroom and, therefore, any efforts by the teacher to make that child understand anything may prove to be fruitless. The size of the classroom is equally important. An overcrowded classroom can be frustrating to a teacher because his/her movements may be limited and she/he may not attend to each child adequately, which affects his professional competence.

#### 4.4.2 Status of Teaching-Learning Materials in the Pre-schools

Information on the status of the teaching-learning materials was obtained through the questionnaires for teachers and through the interviews with the headteachers. Classroom observation checklist was also used. Table 4.20 indicates the responses from the teachers' questionnaires on the status of the teaching-learning materials in their schools.

Table 4.20: Status of the teaching-learning materials in the pre-schools by category

STATUS	CATEGORY									
	CC		P		SH		CS		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Adequate	13	65	10	55.6	4	25	7	35	34	45.9
Fairly Adequate	7	35	8	44.4	7	43.8	8	40	30	41
Not Adequate	-	-	-	-	5	31.2	5	25	10	13.5
Total	20	100	18	100	16	100	20	100	74	100

According to the table, majority of the teachers in the CC category (65%) indicated that the teaching-learning materials were adequate while 35% said they were fairly adequate. None

indicated that the materials were not adequate, an indication that the City Council put a lot of effort in providing materials for their pre-school institutions.

The P school teachers shared the same feelings with those of the CC, 55.6% of them said that the materials were adequate while none said that they were not. This shows that most of the P schools had the necessary teaching-learning materials although some were lacking. In the schools where teachers indicated that the status of teaching-learning materials was fairly adequate (44.4%), it was noticed that children used very tiny pencils. But this was not very rampant in this category.

In the SH category, only 25% of the teachers said that the teaching-learning materials were adequate, 43.8% indicated that they were fairly adequate while 31.2% said that they were not adequate. The latter category had the highest percentage in the lack of teaching-learning materials. This is due to the reasons discussed earlier<sup>16</sup>, viz, lack of funds and high enrolments.

In the CS category, the greatest number of the teachers (40%) indicated that the teaching-learning materials were fairly adequate, 35% indicated that they were adequate while 25% indicated that they were not. This variation is explained by the fact that among the four categories of pre-schools, the CS category had extreme contrasts within itself. There were those schools that were very well equipped and those that were poorly equipped. The contrast was caused by two complementary factors:

- a) The catchment area (i.e. SES of the area).
- b) The fees paid, coupled with parents' participation in the development of the school.

Thus, the CS preschools in high class areas had very good facilities, those in middle class areas had fairly good facilities while those in low class areas and slum had poor facilities.

This was not the case with the other categories. For example, there were hardly any SH pre-schools in high class areas and there were very few P schools in the low class areas. The CC schools were in all the SES areas except in the new estates built after 1980. In the CC schools,

however, there were no notable differences in the physical facilities, going by the SES of the area. Table 4.21 shows the provision of the important teaching-learning materials by category.

Table 4.21 Adequacy of the important teaching-learning materials in the pre-schools by category.

Materials	C A T E G O R Y			
	CC	P	SH	CS
Manilla Papers	A	B	B	A
Text Books	B	A	B	B
Exercise Books	B	A	B	B
Pencils	A	A	B	B
Chalk	A	A	A	A
Musical Instruments	C	B	C	B
Puzzles	B	A	B	B
Toys	B	A	B	B
Charts	A	A	B	A
Modelling Clay	A	A	B	B

Key

- A - Adequate
- B - Fairly adequate
- C - Not adequate

Thus, what most schools lacked by way of teaching-learning materials were musical instruments.

The P schools and the CS schools had fairly adequate musical instruments while the CC and SH schools did not have adequate ones. The teachers said that these instruments were very necessary because children liked and enjoyed music. However, musical instruments are generally expensive, making most pre-schools unable to afford them.

Teachers concurred with the fact that availability or non-availability of teaching-learning materials affected their work, even more than the physical facilities. They said that pre-school children learnt well by doing and seeing. Things like painting brushes, manilla papers, wall charts and exercise books were very important for the children. If these materials are not available, the children hardly learn. One teacher said,

"children, especially, like modelling clay and drawing. Through these activities, they develop creativity and are excited when they model or draw a new thing every day."

One teacher from a CS school in one of the slums said that she felt so frustrated when she could not demonstrate something on the blackboard because there was no chalk. Many a time she had to buy chalk and pencils with her own money so that learning could go on.

It is thus evident that the status of the teaching-learning materials in a pre-school affects not only learning but the teachers' work. If there are no wall charts for demonstration, a child can hardly associate a word with the object it stands for. But it was observed, all the same, that the teachers who did not have these materials were quick at improvising. Children were seen modelling with clay outside the classroom, others using stones or sticks for counting, this where there were no counting beads. The teachers were of the view that their professional quality would improve a great deal if these materials were also improved. The headteachers shared the concern for lack of materials.

Table 4.22 shows the response of the headteachers regarding the problems they encounter. From the table, it is evident that the most nagging problem in the pre-schools was either lack of funds to purchase materials or delay in the purchase of materials. Most of those who said they do not receive materials in good time are from the CC category because they receive their materials from the City Council, although, the things they order are eventually brought, though belatedly. They

suggested that the best way to curb this was to order materials in good time before the existing stock is exhausted.

Table 4.22: Problems encountered by headteachers

P R O B L E M		N=20	%
1.	Either materials are not brought in time or there is lack of funds to improve on them	18	90
2.	Parents expect too much from the teachers, thus forcing the latter to over-burden children	15	75
3.	In admissions, sometimes children are too many and sometimes they are too few.	15	75
4.	Pre-unit dropouts - children not reporting to school after passing Std 1 interviews, thus affecting the school financially.	13	65
5.	Financial problems are prevalent since parents are unable to pay fees on time, thus affecting teachers' salaries and the buying of materials	12	60

Parents' high expectations of the teachers was also cited by 75% of the headteachers as a serious problem. They said that this was all the more reason why teachers need to be equipped with enough teaching-learning materials so as to try and meet these expectations. However, the CC headteachers said they never succumb to the parents' constant threats, which fact makes them lose many children.

The CC teachers said they were accused of not teaching, but they did not mind it because they have to 'let children be children'. Their children, they claimed, always pick up very well in primary school. This is because the pupils become enthusiastic to learn new things, being mature and ready to learn. To them, an ideal pre-school teacher was not the one who filled children with difficult ideas into their mind, just to suit parents, rather, it is he/she who gives the child a chance to learn at his own pace and provides the opportunity for this through the necessary teaching-learning materials, suitable for the child's age and ability.

From the data presented above, therefore, the following points emerge:

i) that the teaching-learning materials are very important for the pre-school child's learning process.

ii) that the presence or absence of the teaching-learning materials affects the teachers' work, either positively or negatively. When the materials are adequate, the teachers' work is smooth and enjoyable. The absence of the materials frustrate him/her since the children are not able to learn well. The teacher's professional qualities are, therefore, supported by adequate provision of teaching-learning materials.

These two points are significant because when a teacher has a large class, it is hard for him/her to attend to each child. On the other hand, a teacher with fewer children is able to attend to each child. Thus adequate physical facilities and teaching-learning materials are an incentive for teachers as well as children to teach and learn. Inadequacy of facilities leads to frustrations for both teachers and children, thus reducing the morale to teach and learn.

#### 4.4.3 Conditions and Terms of Service for Pre-school Teachers

In this section, data pertaining to the pre-school teachers' conditions and terms of service are discussed.

Information on this item was got through the interviews with the headteachers when asked to comment on the teachers' conditions and terms of service, most of them said that these were not good, as depicted by table 4.23.

Table 4.23: Satisfaction of headteachers with the conditions and Terms of Service by category  
(n = number of headteachers)

RESPONSE	CATEGORY									
	CC		CS		P		SH		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Yes	5	100	2	40	1	20	1	20	9	45
No	-	-	3	60	4	80	4	80	11	55
Total	5	100	5	100	5	100	5	100	20	100

Table 4.23 shows that all the CC teachers are satisfied with their conditions and terms of service. This is so because, apart from their salary, they also have other benefits like house allowance, health cover (NHIF), Maternity leave with pay, plus their jobs are permanent and pensionable. The teachers said that their salaries had been reviewed of late, especially in the wake of the training campaign for pre-school teachers. One of them said that if she would complain, it would only be because 'human beings are never satisfied!' But another commented that, even though the terms were good, the teachers worked a lot and, therefore, needed to be better recognized:

"We only consider our terms good because we are comparing ourselves with other pre-school institutions. But coming back to the City Council itself, we would need an increment of salary and other benefits if we look at other peoples'. Our role still needs to be recognized by the Council."

In spite of this, they said that they enjoyed their work because they had job security. Since they were paid according to their grades, they could hardly feel that they were not earning well. Some teachers, they acknowledged, had even left primary schools to join pre-school institutions due to the attractive terms. The salaries in the City Council institutions ranged from Kshs 4,000/= to about 13,000/=, depending on the person's grade and length of service. One

headteacher said that these terms were encouraging since they were just as good as those of some secondary school teachers. However, they all said that, in the face of the rising cost of living, they needed a review of their terms from time to time.

Two headteachers from the CS category (40%) said that their conditions and terms were satisfactory while 3 (60%) said that they were not. The two headteachers who were positive about the terms, were from high-class and middle-class SES areas. This can be attributed to the fact discussed earlier: that the CS schools were different depending on the SES of the areas where the schools were situated. Thus, the 2 headteachers thought that their conditions and terms were good since they enjoyed the benefits of house allowance and maternity leave. In one of the schools, the headteacher responded that, although they did not have any pension scheme, the teachers were required to contribute 10% of their salary to the Voluntary scheme, and the employer would add another 10%. But this was still not very acceptable since teachers still felt that their salaries were not enough when deducted the 10%.

The other three headteachers (60%) of the CS category from low-class and middle-class SES areas said that the conditions and terms of service were not in the least satisfactory because, even though they were the heads, they still earned very little compared to their colleagues in the CC schools. Some of their teachers, they said, earned as little as 500/- per month. The reason for this, they acknowledged, was that the church always expected people to work in the nursery schools as volunteers; but, this is not practical because volunteers are not easy to come by. Their quality of work, therefore, was affected by dissatisfaction and demoralization. Most of the teachers only took the opportunity to be attached to the institutions for the purpose of receiving training; thereafter, they looked for greener pastures.

From the observation made in the class of the teachers in the three CS schools, there was a clear indication that they were not interested in their work. Most of them were not walking around to check children's work, and they were least interested in improvising material for children's

work. One headteacher in a CS slum school said that she had suffered a lot; it was only because she was undergoing training that she chose to stay on for assessment. She lamented thus:

"What do I do with 800/- a month? Surely that is too little. Most of the times I have to walk to school. Its only because I feel for these children that I work so hard. Once I'm through with my training, I will look for another place to work."

This is an indication that the teachers are not satisfied with the little money they get and would like a change for the better.

Contrary to the general view that P schools paid their teachers well, the headteachers of this category did not see this as the case. Only 1 (20%) said that she was satisfied with the conditions and terms of service. Her school is situated in a high class area where parents pay high fees. She said that since parents paid a lot of money, the teachers were also remunerated well. But she added that this was actually not good enough since they did not have any other benefits. Therefore, no matter how much the salary was, it would still not be as good if house allowance was not included.

The rest of the headteachers in the P category, (80%) said that they were not satisfied with their conditions and terms of service. They said that even though it was thought that they earned a lot of money, it was not actually the case because, apart from their salary, they did not have any other benefit. Their salary would be different from the rest by a very small margin, but since it was all in one (house allowance, medical allowance, etc.), it was not really comparable to the rest. They said that they were even more bitter because the children paid a lot of money in school fees, yet they were not given a good salary or any other benefit. They noted that teachers always complained to them about this; however, since the owners of the schools were not willing to act, there was nothing much they could do.

Asked why they had to continue under such conditions, they answered that it was for lack of an alternative; they always kept their ears open for a better place. That explains why most of them were not able to stay in one school for long. The changes were found to be affecting the teachers' quality; for children to get used to a new person every time, it took time; the teacher would also feel demoralized if the children did not respond positively after a long time.

In the SH category, only one headteacher (20%), said that she was satisfied with the conditions and terms of service. She noted that since theirs was a pre-school attached to a larger institution, the latter took up their employment; they were, therefore, paid by grades like the rest of the employees. Thus, they had benefits such as house allowance, maternity leave with pay, permanent and pensionable jobs, and, thus, were eligible to join a cooperative society. She agreed that, under such conditions, one would be able to work better since the comfort would make him/her satisfied and not want to transfer:

"It really matters how an employer treats an employee. It should be realized that pre-school teachers' work is very important and its a high time these teachers were treated with dignity. And this can only be manifested if their terms are improved."

Most of the headteachers in the SH category (80%) said that their conditions and terms needed to be improved a great deal. They said that, even though they understood the fact that most of their children came from poor families and that they paid very little fees, there should, nevertheless, be devised a way to improve their terms. Most of them were paid according to the number of children enrolled, and were always told to look for more children so that they could get better pay. But this affected their work so much, to the extent that whenever there were decreased number of children, they would be preoccupied with the question of where their salary would come from. This made their goals very hard to achieve.

The above results show that the conditions and terms of service for pre-school teachers are poor; most teachers would welcome improvement. The CC schools have better terms than all

the rest. This could be attributed to the fact that the City Council is an establishment that runs all its institutions from one central point and, therefore, rewards all the employees according to their grades. Furthermore, the City Council has other income-generating projects and does not depend on the pre-school institutions for the teachers' salaries and benefits.

Although there were teachers who said that their terms depended on the fees the children paid, most of them in the P category said they did not support this idea because their schools were expensive compared to others. Table 4.24 indicates the school fees paid by children per term by category.

The table shows that all the schools (100%) in the CC and SH categories charge less than Ksh 1,000 per term. The fees in the CC schools range from Ksh 300-600 while, in the SH schools fees range from Ksh 330-360 per term. Although both of them charged almost the same amount, the CC teachers have better terms while the SH teachers deplore their conditions and terms of service.

Table 4.24: Amount of fees paid per term by category

AMOUNT (KSH)	CATEGORY									
	CC		P		SH		CS		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Below 1000	5	100			5	100	2	40	12	60
1001 - 2000			1	20			1	20	2	10
2001 - 3000			1	20			2	40	3	15
3001 - 4000			1	20					1	5
4001+			2	40					2	10
Total	5	100	5	100	5	100	5	100	20	100

In the P category, no school charges less than Kshs.1000 per term while nearly half (40%) charge more than Kshs.4000. However, most of the headteachers interviewed (80%) said they were not satisfied with their terms. The school fees per term in the CS category was varied, with 40% paying less than 1000 per term and another 40% paying between Ksh 2001-3000 per term. These results show, therefore, that the determining factor on satisfaction with the conditions and terms of service did not depend so much on the school fees as the will of the employer.

Pre-school teachers felt that they offered the base for children's future yet their terms were not good compared to those of other institutions of learning. They train children who do not know how to write or read, others are too young and always cry for home. Yet the teachers had to bear with all these training the children until they were used to school life.

The headteachers said that the treatment which pre-school teachers get results from the society not being appreciative of the kind of work they do. If the society changed attitude and appreciated their work, then matters would be different; the headteachers said that parents do not give them the respect they deserve; they simply look down upon them, considering them as 'ayahs' with whom they 'dumped' their children and went to work.

In spite of that, the headteachers concluded that teaching in a pre-school is a call; if one likes it, no one can convince him or her out of it; but, if one was not called to it, the struggle would not be long before she/he left the profession, a frustrated person. And that is why most of them stuck to it despite the poor conditions and terms of service. The headteachers said that even the Ministry of Education had no policy about them; and, that is why most sponsors/owners of pre-schools are taking advantage of pre-school teachers.

The above results show that most pre-school teachers are not well remunerated. Given the kind of work they do, they are of the view that these conditions should be improved. Lack of job satisfaction may lead one to ignore his/her duties, which in effect, affects their professional qualities. Poor remuneration leads teachers into unnecessary transfers as they try to look for

greener pastures. This makes the children unstable, since, having got used to one person, they get so attached that to get used to a different person is hard. Thus, teachers who stay in one place longer are of benefit to the children, and their professional qualities are best developed for best productivity.

#### 4.5 Summary

In this chapter, data has been presented, analyzed and interpreted. The results show certain factors that seriously affect the professional qualities of teachers. In the first place, teachers are trained on different methods which they in turn use in different pre-schools. Then, teaching and learning materials are different as per category, while conditions and terms of service also vary from category to category. These variations affect both the teachers and the children in the sense that, when teachers use different methods, the effect on the children is also different. It implies, therefore, that children go to Standard 1 with different backgrounds which may affect their learning in primary school and beyond.

The variations in physical facilities as well as in teaching and learning materials do also affect the teacher's work at the pre-school level because, at this stage, the child learns by doing and through play. The presence or absence of certain facilities may contribute to a teacher's good or bad performance, hence, the effect on their professional qualities.

Variations in remuneration determine whether a teacher is able to stay in one school for a short or long period. When children get new people every now and then, their learning process is interfered with. The wandering teachers themselves do not improve their professional qualities by moving from school to school. There are significant variations in the CS schools according to the SES area where each school is found. This is because the development of these schools mainly

rests on the parents. Professional qualities of teachers in the CS schools are particularly affected by these variations. 2.2.

2. A detailed summary of the research findings and recommendations is given in the next Chapter. See Section 1.7.

4. See Section 4.1.1 - 4.3.3.

5. See Section 1.7.

6. See Section 2.3.

7. *Ibid.*

8. Some CS Schools are sponsored by the Catholic Church, which is the sponsor for the Montessori Training College.

9. See Section 2.3.

10. *Ibid.*

11. See Section 2.1.1.

12. See Section 2.2.

13. *Ibid.*

14. See Section 2.3.

15. *Ibid.*

16. See Section 4.4.1.

**FOOTNOTES**

1. See Section 2.2.
2. See Section 4.3.
3. See Section 1.7.
4. See Section 4.1.1 - 4.1.3.
5. See Section 1.7.
6. See Section 2.3.
7. Ibid.
8. Some CS Schools are sponsored by the Catholic Church, which is also the sponsor for the Montessori Training College.
9. See Section 2.3.
10. Ibid.
11. See Section 2.1.1.
12. See Section 2.2.
13. Ibid.
14. See Section 2.3.
15. Ibid.
16. See Section 4.4.1.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

#### 5.0 Introduction

5.1.1 This study set out to research on the professional qualities of teachers in the pre-school institutions by type of sponsorship. The main objectives were to examine, in Nairobi:

- a) Academic qualifications of pre-school teachers.
- b) Professional qualifications of pre-school teachers.
- c) Variations in the teaching methods being used in different categories of pre-school institutions.
- d) Variations in the physical facilities in the schools and the teachers' terms and conditions of service.

This was a comparative study of four categories of pre-school institutions by sponsorship, i.e. City Council, Private, Self-Help and Church Sponsored pre-school institutions. The study was guided by the Scientific Approach to comparative education; this approach treats comparative education as any other social science with similar research tactics. The intranational approach to comparative education, which stipulates that comparison is possible within one country, was used in the study.

The sample consisted of the headteachers and teachers of twenty pre-school institutions in Nairobi. In total, there were 20 headteachers and 74 pre-school teachers. There were four

research instruments utilized in the study, namely, questionnaires, interview schedules, observation checklists and document analysis. Data was analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively.

This chapter summarizes the findings, gives recommendations and suggests avenues for further research.

## 5.1 Summary of findings and Conclusions

The results of the study are summarized below, as per the objectives stated.

### 5.1.1 Academic and Professional Qualifications of Pre-School Teachers

The academic and professional qualifications of teachers varied according to categories as listed below:

1. The background of the teachers (age, sex and marital status) showed that older teachers were mainly in the CC and SH categories while younger teachers were in the P and CS categories. The reason for this is mainly because the CC and some of the SH schools have fringe benefits such as house allowance and retirement benefits which the P and CS schools did not enjoy. In the SH schools, where such benefits are not prevalent, the teachers take their work as a service to the community and, therefore, continue working. The teachers were predominantly female. This was attributed to the society's view (culture) that children's affairs regard women. It was noted, though, that men can work with children as much as women and, therefore, more should join the profession. The few men who were in the pre-schools were found in CS and SH categories. Those in the CS category were undergoing training in the church sponsored Montessori program while those in the SH category had offered to help in the running of those institutions. Most of the teachers in the CC category are married compared to

those in the P category. Although this was cited by the P headteachers as important, marital status was not found to be affecting the teachers work in any way.

2. Most of the pre-school teachers are KCE holders; a few are KCPE (or equivalent) holders. Those with KCPE or equivalent joined the profession earlier on and had taught for over ten years. They are thus prevalent in the SH and CS categories. The KCE holders are preferable because they can express themselves well in English, or so it was assumed. This partly shows the importance attached to that level of education. In addition, many people are getting aware of the need for a strong base in pre-school education, and, hence the need for better qualified teachers. In this regard, there was some disparity in that the CC and the CS categories had some KACE holders; there were also two diploma holders in the CS category. This situation can be explained by the good terms in the CC schools as well as in some of the CS schools found in the high class SES areas.
3. Most teachers are trained, although the training varies. The variation ranges from the type of training to the duration it takes. The highest number of trained teachers were found in the CC category and the lowest were in the SH category. In the CC category, it was a requirement for a teacher to be either trained or on training. The largest number of those on training were from the P category because the headteachers mainly recruited the ones who would undergo training while working. This may be attributed to the fact that most P schools are business oriented and, therefore, look for teachers whom they can easily exploit. The duration of training varies according to the kind of training the teachers undergo.

Most of the teachers indicated that they were trained by CICECE whose in-service training runs for two years during the school holidays. Others were pre-service trained at the Montessori (Child Development) Institute whose program runs for two years. Those trained at the CICECE training centre were of the view that the duration was short and, therefore, needed to be extended for them to cover more.

The content also needed expansion since the training prepared them thoroughly for the teaching methods but generally ignored the theory of child development. The Montessori and KHA training is rigorous enough according to those who went through it. But the CICECE training is preferred because it is viewed as offering continuity; its simplicity is welcome by both teachers and children.

4. The heads of preschools unanimously agreed that training is very important for pre-school teachers because it gives teachers a better perspective on how to handle children, how to teach them better and how to promote orderliness. Thus since pre-school children are young and need guidance, a trained teacher would be much better.
5. On experience, the teachers with the longest experience were from the CC category, followed by the SH category. Most of the teachers in the P category had taught for less than 5 years. Although some heads of P schools said experience did not matter, others were of the view that, the more one gets used to a child, the more she/he is able to handle him/her better and the more one doesn't want to leave. After sometime, a teacher needs seminars to update him/herself on the new ideas in the profession. Most teachers had attended seminars, but most P teachers indicated that they had not attended externally arranged seminars; the P headteachers said that they organized internal seminars.

Those who had attended seminars said that they were generally repetitive and needed creative variation.

### 5.1.2 Teaching methods employed in the four categories of pre-school institutions

The professional qualities of teachers can be assessed by the choice of teaching method used or combination of methods. The employment of combined methods was found to be advantageous for the development of children.

1. There are three main teaching methods prevalent in the pre-school institutions in Nairobi, i.e., the Activity/Ministry method, the Montessori method and the KHA method. There was no significant difference observed between the Activity and the KHA method, neither in style nor in content. The researcher, therefore, referred to the two as Activity Method. They both emphasize play and freedom of the child. The Montessori method, however, suppresses play and creativity; children could not use materials other than the Montessori - developed ones; in addition, children spend most of their time indoors. All the CC and SH schools in the sample used the Activity Method. All the schools that exclusively used the Montessori method were from the CS category and the one that used it partly was a private school. The KHA method was used by a few P and CS teachers.
2. The Activity Method is popular because, first of all, most of the teachers are trained in it and, secondly, it is taken to be easier for both the teacher and the children. It was observed that children whose teachers used the Activity Method were free to express themselves and play. Most of the time they learnt through singing. In the Montessori schools, silence was strongly stressed and children were strictly required to keep order. Unlike the Activity Method, which permits

teachers to improvise learning materials, the Montessori teachers give children only specifically developed materials.

3. It was evident, though, that Montessori schools had very many children compared to non-Montessori ones because, one, the children were known to be thorough in reading and writing, and, two, they were disciplined. Most teachers criticized this by saying that the Montessori Method did not 'let children be children'. They also saw it as very expensive method which could not fit into many Kenyan pre-schools. The two Montessori schools are both found in high class areas.

### **5.1.3 Quality of Pre-school Institutions and Teachers Conditions and Terms of Service**

The quality of pre-school institutions was articulated in terms of the physical facilities and the teaching/learning materials. These were examined, mainly through observation, with a view to establishing if they had any impact on teachers' professional quality. The conditions and terms of service of teachers were also examined to establish whether they affected the teachers' work. The principal findings were as follows:

1. Most schools, irrespective of category, have only fairly adequate physical facilities. This means that either the classrooms are not spacious enough, or the playground facilities are either missing or not adequate to satisfy the needs of the children. But the category hardest hit with inadequate facilities is the SH. This is attributed to lack of funds due to the fact that these schools depend mainly on parents and what the sponsoring institution can offer. The fees paid there is also little and can not go a long way in improving the physical facilities in these schools. The CC schools enjoy good physical facilities because they have enough space for expansion, and the City Council always assigns funds, when needed, for the

- expansion and/or renovation of the institutions. The P schools suffer lack of adequate physical facilities mainly due to lack of space for expansion. Most of their classes are not spacious, and the playgrounds are small or missing. In the CS category, the physical facilities depend on the SES of the area on which the school was found. The CS schools in high-income zones have good facilities while those in low income and slum areas have average and poor facilities respectively.
2. Teachers unanimously agreed with the fact that physical facilities were very important in assisting them to execute their role well. They said that squeezed classrooms and the lack of play facilities were foremost in affecting their work, this in the sense that pre-school children need space in the classroom to work with their materials; they also need play facilities outside the classroom because they can not concentrate on class work for a long time. Apart from the Montessori teachers in two CS schools, the rest were of the view that play facilities should be improved a great deal to enable them work better with children, and, thus enhance their professional qualities as teachers.
  3. The teaching-learning materials were also found to be of great importance to the teachers' work because pre-school children need a lot of these materials in class since at their age, they learn better by seeing and doing. Thus, the use of teaching-learning materials can make a big difference to a teacher. The CC category had the most adequate materials followed by the P category. Comparatively, the P schools have more adequate teaching-learning materials than physical facilities. This is due to the same factors mentioned above. It may, therefore, be true that the P schools would like to expand their physical facilities but are hindered by lack of space; when it comes to the teaching-learning materials, they do their best to avail them. The SH category seriously lacked

teaching-learning materials due to constraints in funding. The CS category has disparities within itself just as with regard to the physical facilities.

4. The conditions and terms of service for pre-school teachers were found to be very poor. Apart from the CC and some SH preschools where teachers were employed on permanent and pensionable terms, most pre-school teachers are employed on temporary basis, receive poor salaries, do not have either house allowance, or maternity leave with pay, and/or loan facilities. It was noted that, even though the P teachers seemingly got better salaries than others, the margin was not wide; most of them preferred a permanent and pensionable job rather than a highly paid one with no fringe benefits. That is why most of them do not stay in one school for long, as they search for greener pastures, with better terms and conditions of service.

Pre-school teachers pointed out that working while dissatisfied was hard and, that most of the time they found themselves being bitter and not able to attend to the children well. Apart from the CC category, where teachers registered satisfaction with their conditions and terms of service, the rest of the teachers were unhappy with theirs and wished something would be done to encourage them serve the children better.

#### 5.1.4 Conclusions.

In view of the above findings, the following conclusions are made:

1. In the past, pre-school teachers were not trained specifically for their role. They were trained as nurses, housekeepers, etc. This trend is changing because pre-school teachers are now trained in early childhood education, according to the findings of this study. But the kind of training received

is still not streamlined. Hence, it needs improvement both in terms of duration and content.

2. The level of education required of teachers in the profession is rising. While in the past even Standard 7 or 8 dropouts were accepted to teach in pre-schools, today, only form four leavers are allowed due to the fact that they can express themselves better and are more able to handle young children. Although definite criteria for eligibility to teach in pre-schools are not set, the profession is slowly phasing out those with lower academic ability.
3. There exists serious disparities in the pre-school institutions by sponsorship. This seriously affects the professional quality of the teacher, leading to serious repercussions on children. The CC schools have an advantage in that they are owned by the City Council, an established public body which is able to maintain the schools well; most of the CC schools are old and located in large pieces of land, making expansion possible. The P schools are owned by individuals and are business oriented and, thus, they work mainly for the success of their businesses. Although most of them do not have spacious compounds, they try their level best to avail the teaching-learning materials. The SH schools are attached to institutions started by parents on harambee basis. Their success depends much on the parents or the institutions to which they are attached. Thus, most of them are deficient in one way or the other; others treat their teachers well by giving them relatively attractive terms while trying their best to avail the important teaching-learning materials.

The CS schools are attached to churches and are run almost in the same way as the P schools.

4. The SES of the areas in which the schools are found contributes to the disparities in pre-school education. The CS category is the most affected by the socio-economic disparity. The schools in high-class areas are good in facilities and offer their teachers attractive terms and conditions of service. Those in the low class and slum areas have very poor facilities and unattractive teachers' conditions and terms of service. The SH schools are hardly found in high class estates except where some are attached to certain institutions. Compared to the others in the same category, the institutional SH pre-schools have better terms and conditions of service for teachers since they (teachers) are permanent and pensionable; the schools also have average physical facilities and teaching-learning materials. The CC schools are found in both high class and low class areas but they are not found in the new estates. There are no serious disparities within the CC schools in terms of teachers except that the school fees differ from area to area. There are three levels of fees in the CC category depending on the area in which the school is situated. The schools found in high class areas pay higher fees than the rest. This, though, does not affect the quality of the school in any way. The P schools are mainly found in high and middle class areas. They are rarely found in the low class estates. Although school fees are high in most of these schools, their quality still leaves a lot to be desired, especially in terms of physical facilities and teacher remuneration.

5. Thus, sponsorship and class factors in Nairobi interplay to determine the professional qualities of teachers in Nairobi. However, sponsorship factors have a stronger bearing in the sense that they determine which school is present where and which programme a teacher undertakes. The sponsors also decide what kind of teachers they want with regard to the ECE methodology, how to remunerate them, what is the best way to uplift their school in terms of physical facilities and teaching-learning materials.
6. The kind of training received, the physical facilities, the teaching-learning materials, and the remuneration of teachers all affect their work as pre-school teachers. Thus teachers with certain kinds of training (viz. Cicece, Montessori, KHA) follow a defined way of teaching thus facilitating differences in teaching methods. Teachers enjoying adequate physical facilities, sufficient teaching-learning materials and good conditions and terms of service like their work more and feel satisfied with pre-school teaching, thus, boosting their professional qualities.
7. Although the early educators (Froebel, Montessori and Rousseau) urged teachers not to overload children with a lot of knowledge beyond their age, actual and intensive teaching is going on in the pre-schools. Teachers follow heavy syllabi, sometimes those designed for standard one, and children have very little time to play. They (teachers) argue that this is what parents like, since the school system is so competitive, making children who pass interviews to be taken into Standard 1 in good schools. Thus, apart from the CC schools which resist the temptation of teaching too much to young children, the other pre-schools actually teach a lot.

This could possibly explain why most CC schools do not have many children, especially in areas where P schools are abundant.

### 5.1.5 Policy Recommendations

It is evident from the findings of this study that there are disparities in the four categories of pre-schools as far as the professional qualities of teachers are concerned. Below are the major recommendations of the study:

- i) There is no clear-cut policy on pre-school teacher training in Kenya; the training for pre-school teachers is varied from institution to institution. Possibilities of having a uniform training should be discussed and a government policy enacted to this end. This study has revealed that the types of existing training, though different, can be amalgamated to form a stronger base for pre-school teacher training in Kenya. This would minimize the differentiations existing in pre-school education, which in turn affects the future education of children.
- ii) The existing training varies both in duration and content. This matter should be reviewed so that training is expanded in both duration and content. This would ensure that more courses on ECE, other than teaching methods, are included and thoroughly discussed.
- iii) The government should come up with a policy on what is expected of any pre-school institution with regard to the minimum requirements for teachers' terms and conditions of service (minimum requirements). This would minimize exploitation of pre-school teachers by some pre-school sponsors.

- iv) Pre-school inspection should be enhanced so that schools which are not good enough in terms of physical facilities and teaching-learning materials would be assisted so as to enable the teachers to serve the children better.
- v) Parents should be sensitized on what is good for their children at the pre-school age, and meetings should be arranged for both teachers and parents to understand one another better so that they may not blame each other for any eventuality. This should be coordinated by the Ministry of Education.
- vi) More training opportunities should be extended to pre-school teachers. Since there is need for improvement, refresher courses should be organized. On-the-job training and seminars on diverse topics need to be increased so that teachers may share their ideas and learn more about children. Competent pre-school teachers should also be awarded scholarships to study abroad by the Ministry of Education and NGOs. This would encourage more and more people to join the profession.
- vii) Non-governmental organizations should also be called upon to assist in funding pre-school projects and uplifting poor pre-school institutions. This would lessen the rift between the pre-schools by sponsorship and encourage teachers to teach in any pre-school institutions.

#### 5.1.6 Suggestions for Further Research

In this study, the Professional Qualities of teachers in twenty pre-school institutions in Nairobi were compared by sponsorship. A study based on a wider sample would come up with more

findings to help expand pre-school teacher education in Kenya, and ECE in general. The following are the suggested areas for further research.

1. This research only focused on one urban area, Nairobi. The same type of research could be carried out for other urban areas.
2. A comparative study of the rural and urban pre-school teachers could be carried out.
3. A comparative study of the three major methods of teaching should also be carried out to determine what kind of impact they have on the children.
4. A study should be carried out on Standard One children to determine the impact of pre-school education on them and the result of the method of teaching on life after pre-school.

## 5.2 Summary

In chapter five, a summary of the findings, conclusions, policy recommendations and suggestions for further research have been presented. It has been observed that pre-school teacher education needs a lot of improvement.

The issue of pre-school disparity should be addressed if equal opportunities for education have to be achieved. If pre-school education continues in this kind of diversity, it is likely to affect the system. Pre-school education is the base of the system since what a child learns in pre-school is likely to affect his/her later education. This base, being thus important, needs to be safeguarded.

Teachers are the cornerstone of education. Children of pre-school age need competent guidance since they are too young to make decisions. To be equipped for this task, teachers must be equipped with proper training and provided with proper facilities to fulfil their task. Their job satisfaction should also be raised in order that they may work better. This can only be done if

issues about their remuneration are addressed squarely, and better terms and conditions of service implemented.

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### INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR HEADS OF PRE-SCHOOLS

1. When were you appointed headteacher of this pre-school?
2. What is your academic and professional background?
3. For how long have you worked in this school in any capacity?
4. Why do you think pre-schools are mushrooming in your area? (probe whether it is due to business, educational, or population reasons).
5. When was this school started?
6. How many members of staff do you have?
7. What is your role/roles as headteacher of the pre-school?
8. How does your teaching load compare with other members of staff?
9. Who supplies the materials you use in the pre-school?
10. Are you satisfied with the adequacy/suitability/relevance of the materials provided? Explain.
11. What kind of syllabus/curriculum and teaching methods are used in this pre-school?
12. What do you think of these teaching methods? Do you have other methods in mind that could be used effectively?
13. Are there any problems related to the syllabus/curriculum and teaching methods that are being used in the school? Which ones?
14. Do you think your school experiences it essential for children to be admitted into Standard One? Why?
15. What are the main problems that you face in your work? (Probe in terms of materials, staff, discipline, enrolment and admissions etc.)
16. Do you think there is any need for training pre-school teachers? Give reasons.

**Appendices****APPENDIX 1****INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR HEADS OF PRE-SCHOOLS**

1. When were you appointed headteacher of this pre-school?
2. What is your academic and professional background?
3. For how long have you worked in this school in any capacity?
4. Why do you think pre-schools are mushrooming in your area? (probe whether it is due to business, educational, or population reasons).
5. When was this school started?
6. How many members of staff do you have?
7. What is your role/duties as headteacher of the pre-school?
8. How does your teaching load compare with other members of staff?
9. Who supplies the materials you use in the pre-school?
10. Are you satisfied with the adequacy/suitability/ relevance of the materials provided? Explain.
11. What kind of syllabus/curriculum and teaching methods are used in this pre-school?
12. What do you think of these teaching methods? Do you have other methods in mind that could be used effectively?
13. Are there any problems related to this syllabus/curriculum and teaching methods that are being used in the pre-school? Which ones?
14. Do you think pre-school attendance is essential for children to be admitted into Standard One? Why?
15. What are the main problems that you face in your work? (Probe in terms of materials, staff discipline, dropouts and admissions etc.)
16. Do you think there is any need for training pre-school teachers? Give reasons.

17. What noticeable differences do you find in the trained /untrained or experienced/inexperienced teachers in their work?
18. Which criteria do you use to select/employ your teachers?
19. Comment on your teachers' terms and conditions of service.

Please provide the information requested below. You need not

write your name. The information will be treated

confidentially to assist pre-school teacher training in Kenya.

(Mark the appropriate responses or provide information requested).

#### PERSONAL INFORMATION

1. Your age... years
2. Sex : Male... Female....
3. Marital Status: Married.....Single.....
4. What is your level of education?

K.C.P./K.C.P.E. ....

K.C.E./K.C.S.E. ....

K.A.C.E. ....

Diploma ....

University graduate ....

Postgraduate ....

Other (Specify) ....

5. How many years have you taught in Pre-school institutions?

Up to 5 years

## APPENDIX 2

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

Dear Teacher,

Please provide the information requested below. You need not write your name. The information will be treated

confidentially to assist pre-school teacher training in Kenya.

(Tick (✓) where appropriate or provide information required).

Background Information.

1. Your age.....years
2. Sex : Male.....Female.....
3. Marital Status: Married.....Single.....
4. What is your level of education?
  - K.C.P.E./C.P.E. ....
  - K.C.E./K.C.S.E .....
    - K.A.C.E. ....
    - Diploma .....
      - University graduate .....
        - Postgraduate .....
          - Other (Specify) .....
5. How many years have you taught in Pre-school Institutions?
  - Upto 5 years - .....

6-10 years .....

11-15 years .....

16+ .....

6. For how long have you taught in this institution?

Less than 5 years .....

5-10 years .....

11-15 years .....

16+ .....

7. If you were a teacher in any other level of learning before you started teaching in nursery schools, indicate which one below: (Tick)

Primary School .....

Secondary .....

College (TTC) .....

University .....

Other (Specify) .....

8. If you have ever worked anywhere else other than in a teaching Institution, specify the institution.

Professional Training:

9. Have you received any training related to pre-school teaching?

Yes .....

No .....

10. If yes, what was the duration of the training?

- Less than six months .....
- 16. What teaching methods do you use?  
6-12 months .....
- 13-18 months .....
- 17. Why do you use these methods?  
18+ .....

11. How would you describe the training you received in terms of its usefulness to your present job?

Very useful .....

Useful .....

Partly useful .....

Not useful .....

Give reasons .....

12. If you find necessary, please suggest below what you would recommend to be added to the teacher training program to make it better.

.....

13. Have you attended any seminar/workshop on early childhood education since you started teaching in pre-school

institutions?

YES .....

NO .....

14. If Yes, what were the themes of these workshops?

.....

Give reasons.

15. In what ways have they helped you in your work?

.....

24. Teaching - Learning Strategies in your class?

16. What teaching methods do you use?

.....

17. Why do you use these methods?

.....

18. During your training, were you taught anything concerning the development and use of teaching materials?

Yes ..... No.....

19. If yes, state briefly how this information has helped you.

.....

20. If no, do you find it hard to develop and use materials to enhance the learning of pre-school children? Yes/No

Explain your answer.

.....

21. Which major problems do you encounter while teaching pre-school children?

.....

22. How do you deal with these problems?

.....

23. If you are not trained as a pre-school teacher, do you feel it would be useful to you if you received some training?

Give reasons.

.....

24. How many children do you have in your class?

Below 30.....

30 - 39.....

40 - 49.....

50+.....

25. Do you feel that the number of children you teach affects your work? Yes/No.

Explain your answer below.

.....

26. Comment on the adequacy of the physical facilities and the teaching/learning materials available in the school.

.....

**APPENDIX 3****OBSERVATION CHECKLIST**

1. Teaching - Learning Sessions in the classroom.
  - (a) Introduction of different subjects.
  - (b) Interactions in the classroom/questions, answers.
  - (c) Assistance from teachers in reading - writing skills.
  - (d) Major interests of the children.
  - (e) Method of teaching.
  
2. Use of resources in the classroom.
  - (a) Teaching aids.
  - (b) Use of available space.
  - (c) Sitting arrangement.
  - (d) Textbooks and materials for teachers/students.
  
3. Play facilities in and outside the classrooms.
  - (a) Playground and space in classrooms.
  - (b) swings.
  - (c) Ropes.
  - (d) Puzzles.
  - (e) Toys.
  - (f) Other facilities.
  
4. Activities outside the classroom.
  - (a) Type of activities.
  - (b) Organization.

- (c) Student-Teacher interaction.
- (d) Aids used.
- (e) Pupils' interaction with the natural environment.

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