

# A Critical Analysis of the Entrepreneurial Syndrome on Early Childhood Quality Service Delivery in ECDE Centres in Kenya

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## Abstract

The purpose of the study was critical analysis of the entrepreneurial syndrome on early childhood quality service delivery in ECDE centres in Kenya. Most ECDE entrepreneurs do not have knowledge about ECDE and therefore cannot run them as expected. The critical analysis was to establish support needed by the learners in ECDE centres in centres managed and run by entrepreneurs. The main purpose of the study was done basing on the following objectives: to critically analyze the entrepreneur teacher training support on early childhood quality service delivery, to critically analyze the entrepreneur instructional support on early childhood quality service delivery in ECDE centres in Kenya, to critically analyze the learning resources and materials used in entrepreneurial ECDE centres, to analyze learning environment for learners in entrepreneurial ECDE centres, to analyze feeding programmes for learners in entrepreneur ECDE centres and lastly to analyze child health care support for ECDE children in entrepreneurial ECDE centres. Qualitative research design was used to study critical analysis. The research finding are most entrepreneurs need to be sensitized on importance of ECDE training of teachers, importance of learning resources and materials used in ECDE centres, importance of conducive learning environment for ECDE children, importance of feeding programmes and lastly the importance of child health care when in ECDE centres. In the study the recommendations established were to the parents, government and entrepreneurs. The researcher recommends for training of teachers, use of relevant learning materials and resources to be used in ECDE, good learning environment, feeding programmes and provision of child health care.

**Key words:** Entrepreneurial syndrome, quality service, feeding programmes, learning resources.

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

ECDE entrepreneurship is on the increase today in Kenya. Initially different businesses were done by professional in specific fields but today with the need for better education, most parents have been coaxed to take their children to ECDE centres started by unprofessional. At first ECDE centres in Kenya were managed by communities and NGO's but today anybody willing to provide leaning environment can start and manage. This has led to poor service delivery in ECDE because an ECDE institution may be started by laymen whose interest is only business and not services to the child.

According to children's Act (2001). Children have rights that must be addressed by anybody handling them. Most of these rights have been infringed due to children being left in hands of people who are not aware of their rights. ECDE education marks the beginning of the child's life and the way their life is handled in this stage will have a great impact in their future life. There are various policies that have been formulated by the government that deals with ECDE dynamics that address the quality services delivery. The gist of this study was to critically analyze how the entrepreneurship syndrome has impacted the quality service delivery in ECDE centres.

## **2. 0. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM**

Entrepreneurial ECDE centres have become an issue on ECD quality service delivery. Because of the need to get money, many entrepreneur start ECDE centres without minding about the services to be offered there. First the centres are started in structures not conducive for learning. The environment may also not be save for the young children. Most of entrepreneurs are not professionals themselves in ECDE and yet are expected to manage the activities taking place in ECDE centres. Children in such institutions end up missing the necessary services. The ECDE teachers are seen to be less qualified and young inexperienced teachers are hired as teachers. Proper development of the child is not gathered for as there is

no enough knowledge. The feeding programme is not handled as expected by the professionals who have knowledge about food nutrients. The programmes are only done to address the issues of hunger alone and not nutrition. The issue of child health care is not addressed and ignorant parent on child health are not helped. Most entrepreneurs see ECD to a class of chalk and talk, they don't provide learning materials that are needed in different activity areas in ECDE because they beliefs children learn as they teach write and talk. The exploratory behaviour of children is restricted when there are no leaning materials, meaning little learning takes place. The ECDE learners are not handled the way they should be for healthy growth and development. If all these issues are not addressed the quality education and services delivered to the children at the years of their foundation will be compromised.

### **3.0. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of the study was to critically analyze the entrepreneurial syndrome on early childhood quality service delivery in ECDE centres in Kenya.

### **4.0. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

- i. To critically analyze the entrepreneur teachers training support on early childhood quality service delivery in ECDE centres in Kenya.
- ii. To critically analyze the entrepreneur instructional resource and materials support on early childhood quality delivery of service in ECDE centres in Kenya.
- iii. To critically analyze the entrepreneur learning environment support on early childhood quality service delivery in ECDE centres in Kenya.
- iv. To critically analyze the entrepreneur feeding programme support on early childhood quality delivery of service in ECDE centres in Kenya.
- v. To critically analyze the entrepreneur child health care support on early childhood quality delivery of service in ECDE centres in Kenya.

## 5.0. RESEARCH QUESTIONS.

- i. How are the teachers in entrepreneurial ECDE centres trained in ECDE for quality service delivery?
- ii. How are the entrepreneurs giving support on the instructional material and resources used in ECDE centres for quality service delivery?
- iii. How is learning environment for learners in entrepreneur supporting ECDE for quality service delivery?
- iv. To what extent are the entrepreneurs able to support feeding programmes of learners in ECDE centres for quality service delivery?
- v. How are the learners health care supported in entrepreneurial ECDE centres for quality service delivery?

## 6.0. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study may help children/learners to get good learning conditions in entrepreneurship like trained teachers, instructional materials, conducive learning environment, feeding programmes and proper healthcare. When all needs of children are met, they are able to develop holistically. The study may help parents to know the conditions necessary for healthy growth and development of their children and therefore take their children to ECDE centres that cater for their needs.

The study may help entrepreneurs to be able to know the need of ECDE children and hence cater for them to avoid a lot of risks. The study may help also help the ministry of education (MOE) to know the challenges faced by the children in entrepreneurial centres and be able to look for ways of dealing with them. This can be done by the government formulating policy on all ECDE children.

## **7.0. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **7.1. TO CRITICALLY ANALYZE ENTREPRENEUR TEACHER TRAINING SUPPORT ON EARLY CHILDHOOD QUALITY SERVICE DELIVERY IN ECDE CENTRES.**

It is government recommendations that ECDE teachers should be trained. Trained teachers have knowledge skills and attitude on handling young learners. They also have knowledge of the different methods used in teaching, such teachers are able to vary methods of teaching by choosing the ones that are fitting for different activities. According to Beck and Zaslow (2006) early childhood teachers training is of great importance to quality experience given to young children.

Trained teachers know that for learning to take place, the children must participate actively and therefore needs time and materials to engage in their participation. From the research done one of the problem affecting ECDE is lack of trained personnel according to MOE, (2008). There are barriers to the learning that should be addressed to for proper learning to take place. Such barriers can only be identified by somebody who is trained in ECDE. The barriers include physical like; sitting arrangement, classrooms space; emotional barriers caused by psychological changes and situations in the home or society; interaction barriers which may arise from undermining sex, cultural background or ability of learners. A trained teacher will identify such barriers and deal with them appropriately. Fukkink & Lont, (2007) states that trained teachers have knowledge, skills, attitude and improved competence in handling young children.

Most of the entrepreneurial ECDE centres hire anybody to teach. They see the young children as not needing a lot of qualification since what they learn is very little. They don't realize that how a child is handled when young will have some impact which is either positive or negative in their lives. The role of entrepreneurs here is to earn profit and therefore hire untrained teachers with low pay at the expense of holistic development of the child. Vendell, O'Brien &

McCartney (2002) states that training on early childhood curriculum and its practices has direct relation to sensitivity of teachers and language build-up with young children. Trained ECDE teachers in entrepreneurial ECDE centres are able to handle young children properly and in the end maximized their achievements.

## **7.2. TO CRITICALLY ANALYZE THE ENTREPRENEUR INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES AND MATERIALS SUPPORT ON EARLY CHILDHOOD QUALITY SERVICE DELIVERY IN ECDE CENTRES.**

Learning resources should be provided for ECDE learners. The resources may include classrooms which are well ventilated and with enough light, desks that are of the right size for the young learners. Some entrepreneurs start ECDE centres for the sake of earning money. They don't consider how the classrooms are as some centres are operated in small rooms in towns which are not good environments for learning and the rooms are squeezed as the children are pumped inside.

Instructional materials to be used should be able to gather for the needs of the young learners. The learning materials should be collected locally, bought or from donors. When collecting the materials one should consider the activities done in ECDE as recommended by KIE. Activities include; language activities, mathematics activities, outdoor activities, science, social, creative, music and movement, religious and life skill activities. Some of the learning materials that must be their includes charts, story books, flashcards, Audio visual Aids, crayons, clay , number cards , pictures, cut outs, realia , bible and picture books. Using learning materials to teach young children make learning to be real as compared to chalk and talk which has little impact in children learning. Using concrete learning materials makes learning real and important (Kochar, 1991). Children such be provided with plenty of learning materials basing on their ages, their levels of development and their interests according to NACECE (2001) This is because not all children have the same interests nor do they develop at the same pace according to age. Learning materials for each and every child should be provided basing on activities they can accomplish at a particular age.

Children should be left to manipulate the learning materials as this will promote their understanding of concepts. Kosambiral (1993) states that one picture is worth a thousand words. Textbooks are learning materials to be used in delivering knowledge and syllabus books acts as a guide on what should be covered in the curriculum. Adequate learning materials and resources in class are necessary for effective quality learning (Bishop, 1995)

Children get to understand what they learn better when they are involved in activities that deals with all their senses, Rief. (1993) This shows the importance of involving senses in children's learning more participation of learners in the learning process leads to better achievements. To promote senses learning materials and resources must be used. Entrepreneurs should promote the use of relevant learning materials in their institutions.

### **7.3. TO CRITICALLY ANALYZE THE ENTREPRENEUR LEARNING ENVIRONMENT SUPPORT ON EARLY CHILDHOOD QUALITY SERVICE DELIVERY IN ECDE CENTRES.**

The learning environment for young children should be child friendly. The learning environment the child is in shapes the behavior and learning as stated by Albert Bandura. The children are in the hands of their parents before they come to ECDE centres and are ensured of a safe environment, love. David and carol Weinstain (1987), points out that emotional live of young children are build when they are attached to places they love and objects they like The ECDE environment should be safe as the children are in exploratory stage so that they don't harm themselves. All the things that may pause a risk to the young learners should be kept away from their risk for example plastic bags, sharp objects, and holes in the fields.

Children learn best through play and it their learning is based on play activities they are able to gain more knowledge. According to Jean Piaget (1980), the learners participate in constructing knowledge and do not act as passive knowledge receivers. Play activities needs playground and therefore entrepreneur must provide space for playing. Those without the knowledge of ECDE learning think that learning is classroom centered. A young child need to

develop holistically i.e mentally, physically, spiritually, linguistically, morally, artistically and aesthetically . Play therefore promotes all the aspects of development when done in a conducive environment. According to B.F Skinner (1974) children develop to be of desirable behaviour due to reinforcement or punishments from people in the environment. Teachers also constitute the learning environment. The way teachers handle the young learners may either promote or hinder their learning. The teachers should be well conversant with home school transition – so that they can make school to be friendly to the children.

According to child friendly manual (2006) furniture to be used by children should merge their size and stature. Some centres have higher tables for the child and benches which may not be stable. This makes learning to be unfriendly to the child because struggle must be there in order to achieve anything taught. This causes stress to the child and in the end affect learning. Entrepreneurs should ensure that their institution meets all the conditions of child friendly learning environment.

#### **7.4. TO CRITICALLY ANALYZE THE ENTREPRENEUR FEEDING PROGRAMME SUPPORT ON EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICE DELIVERY IN ECDE CENTRES**

Feeding programme is very important for all ECDE children in any institution. It is meant to cater for nutritional needs of the children. Children who take food that is not nutritious end up suffering from deficiency diseases, being retarded in development or with low intelligence quotient (IQ). Most parents especially those of low educational level do not understand about nutrition. They look at high class expensive meals to be nutritious not minding about the nutrients such food contain. The parents are able to sponsor their children to join entrepreneurial ECDE centres. If food offered in institutions is not balanced the children will end up having problems associated with nutrition. Proper nutrition of children's diet has favourable results on education attained according to Halterman (2001). Nutritious food should contain vitamins, proteins, carbohydrates and micro nutrients like vitamin A, iron and iodine. Walker et al (2007) states that improving nutritional status of children thought

provision of stimulation and food supplement lead to holistic development. Lack of the right nutrients affects the learners' intellectual and physical development. Under nutrition affect exploratory behaviour of children and contribute to lack of initiative.

Most entrepreneurial ECDE centres are managed by anybody willing to establish the centre. It doesn't matter whether the entrepreneurs has knowledge about ECDE. As for the high class centres, children are provided with high class food not minding about the nutrients the food have. In low class ECDE centres children are provided with food that can be afforded with the little amount of cash received and therefore the issue of nutrition is not considered. The nutritional status of the children is a measure that affects their development as stated by Godlewska and Klerebinski (1981).

Entrepreneurial ECDE centres should provide nutritious feeding programmes. Entrepreneurs should be trained on the types of meals to be prepared for children to avoid being ignorant. This will help the children to get the right meals and help them to be healthy especially in cases where the parents are ignorant.

#### **7.5. TO CRITICALLY ANALYZE THE ENTREPRENEUR CHILD HEALTH CARE SUPPORT ON EARLY CHILDHOOD QUALITY SERVICE DELIVERY IN ECDE CENTRES.**

Every child as an individual must be provided with good health care. The health care includes full immunization schedule that is polio vaccine, DPT vaccine, measles vaccine and Tuberculosis vaccines. If all the vaccines are administered to the child as expected in the right time the child is sure to get rid of all the diseases associated with them. Improving sanitation and practicing good hygiene promotes healthy development. UNESCO and Garcia et al. (2007) states that increase in pre-school in a country reduce the number of children less than five years who are under weight.

Growth monitoring is also a health practice to check on health status of the child, taking the measurements of the arm on the upper part continuously on monthly basis may make one to

tell if the children is increasing in size normally or abnormally. If growth is abnormal the child may be taken for medical treatment and in case of disease outbreak it is the duty of ECDE centre administration to identify and communicate to the health officers for treatment. Most of childhood diseases are communicable and should be addressed to immediately in case there is an outbreak, since children are being taken to ECDE centres when they have passed immunization, it is the duty of the teacher to check for immunization card of every child. Those who have not completed immunization their parents should be advised to take them for full immunization.

According to J. Nkunyangi and Susan Wandende (UNESCO 1995) they examined the relationship between child health and school performance. Their study confirmed that enrolled children with poor health tend to perform poorly in class and in entrepreneurial ECDE centres such things may not be checked because it may hinder admissions. This poses a risk to the children already admitted in case of a disease outbreak. Most of the entrepreneurs ECDE centres do not liaise with the community health workers and therefore to get health services becomes a problem, they should ensure that all the children are in good health when in ECDE centres so that they perform better.

## **8. 0. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

A critical analysis of the entrepreneurial syndrome on early childhood quality service delivery in ECDE centres in Kenya formed the study. Qualitative research was used to carry out the research as it proves to be reliable basing on the selected topic and the method to be used had to enhance creativity and capture the necessary findings. Qualitative research meets the requirements and had to be used. This research method helps in gathering information from naturalistic findings hence there is no alteration.

## **9.0. CONCLUSION**

The findings shows that most ECDE entrepreneurial centres were started and managed as business centres. Most entrepreneurs do not have knowledge about ECDE except a few. The

services offered are therefore doom to child development and the government, parents and entrepreneurs should ensure that ECDE centres are provided with all the necessary quality services. Teachers handling ECDE children should be ECDE trained and learning materials should be used when teaching to promote proper development of the child.

Entrepreneurs are not providing learning materials necessary for child development. Children understand when they are involved in activities hence doing is using materials which should be available. The learning environment should be conducive to the child, safe and child friendly as this will promote holistic development of the child and the entrepreneurs should have knowledge on the curriculum to be followed in ECDE so that the right curriculum can be carried out. The study also concluded that feeding programmes should be nutritious as this leads to better performance and the health of the child be considered during learning because unhealthy child is not able to learn as she/he may not be able to participate fully.

## **10.0. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The study identified areas that needs to be improved be entrepreneurs running ECDE centres so that the programmes can succeed and for proper personality development of the child. They include

1. The entrepreneurs should liaise with the government on the policy of teacher training. In involvement of trained teachers early in children's life leads to maximum results realization.
2. Learning resources and materials that should be provided by the entrepreneurs to make learning real. The resources and materials can be used bought, made locally or realia can be used. Learning materials make learning to be enjoyable and for easy acquisition of concepts.

3. The entrepreneurs should ensure that the learning environment is very conducive to the young child. The teacher, the classroom facilities and playground must be considered by entrepreneurs as they may affect the child.
4. Feeding programme should be provided in ECDE centres which is nutritious, to promote the healthy growth of the child. The food should contain all the food nutrients to cater for the body requirements of the child.
5. The entrepreneurs should liaise with the ministry of health to cover for health services. This includes immunization, disease treatment and deworming.
6. The government, parents and entrepreneur should provide quality services to the learners as this will promote their development.

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