

Dynamics of Gender Disparity among Teachers of Young Children in Thika District, Kenya

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Abstract

Parents are the main care givers and socializing agents of their children. They provide for their basic needs in terms of nutrition, health, care, love and affection, among others. In the process of development mothers provide warmth and tender touches to children while fathers are symbols of authority, strength and security. Early Childhood Development Centers (ECDC) are accepted the world over as alternatives to traditional childcare systems. Children start going to preschools at the age of 3 years. The experiences of the child in preschool are a continuation of the home. As such, the preschool teachers hold a double mantle of parent as well as teacher.

Quality care for these children should be provided by both female and male teachers. However this concern of gender parity in childcare seemed not to be addressed in the reviewed studies related to pre-schools. This paper presents the results of a study conducted in two sampled districts of Kenya to establish the distribution of teachers in preschool centers by gender and to find out the factors influencing gender disparity among teachers of young children. The study was guided by two theories: Sigmund Freud's Psychoanalytic Theory and Albert Bandura's social learning theory. The two theories contend that children need care and attention to enhance their growth and development; and that part of what they develop is emulated from male and female care givers. It is hoped that this study will help policy makers to consider encouraging male applicants to promote wholistic development of children. This is the only study in Africa South of the Sahara that focuses mainly on the preschool teacher and articulates the issues of gender disparity with such an emphasis.

Keywords: Care givers, Preschool centers, Gender parity, Double mantle, Childcare systems

Full text:

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