

# Teacher Professional Qualification in Early Childhood Education and Its Influence on Promotion Rates in Public Primary Schools in Embu County, Kenya

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## Abstract

Early Childhood Education (ECE) is fundamental to holistic development of children between zeros to eight years old. Thus, teacher professional development is key to enabling children grow and develop in the most appropriate ways. This study examined the extent to which teacher professional qualification in Early Childhood Education influences promotion rates of children in public primary schools in Embu County, Kenya. To achieve this objective the study adopted correlation research design, where stratified and simple random sampling techniques were used to sample 39 ECE schools attached to public primary schools. Simple random sampling was used to select 39 public primary headteachers, 39 ECE teachers and 156 public primary teachers Data for this study was collected through the use of questionnaires. An observation schedule checklist and documentary analysis guide for purposes of data triangulation. To check reliability and validity of research instruments, a pilot study was conducted Data from the questionnaire was analyzed through the use descriptive and inferential statistics while data from interviews and documentary analysis guide was analyzed in themes in line with the research objective. Research findings from quantitative data were presented using frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations, and inferential statistics using Pearson Chi-Square Tests. Results showed that there is a positive correlation between teacher professional qualification in ECE and promotion rates in public primary schools ECE ( $r=.672$ ,  $n=37$ ,  $p<.05$ ). The research concluded that there is a positive correlation between teacher professional qualification in ECE and the promotion rates of learners in public primary schools. The study recommended that the Teacher's Service Commission in collaboration with the County Governments should continue to deploy adequate and qualified primary and ECE teachers to both primary and ECE schools to improve internal efficiency.

**Keywords:** internal efficiency, early childhood education, teacher professional qualification, ECE schools, promotion rates

## 1. Introduction

Teacher professional qualification is very essential in education of learners. This improves teachers' professionalism which is a necessity in class delivery which enhances learners' promotion rates to the next class (Leibur, Saks, & Chountana, 2021). Hence, learners' promotion rates are aspects of internal efficiency in learning institutions. Internal efficiency is defined differently by different scholars. Lockheed and Hanusheck (1994) noted that internal efficiency is a correlation of learning, which is analyzed using cost-effectiveness, and measured by the system's immediate outputs. According to Oteyo (2013), internal efficiency is the total number of learners who complete the cycle of one level of education and are ready to transit to the next level. While, Pradhan (2005) pointed that internal efficiency is the simple intake and out turn of learners and is concerned with potential wastes in the process related to dropouts at various educational levels. Several other researchers such as Babalola (2003), Olubor (2004) and Akinwuniju (1995) viewed internal efficiency as the relationship between inputs such as teacher professional qualification and output as promotion rates of children. They assert that internal efficiency is shown by indicators such as transition and promotion rates in children. In addition, they contend that an internally efficient system of education has less retention, dropouts, and repetition rates. This is determined by cohort analysis at the ECE level of education, which shows that the ECE level is capable of producing children who graduate successfully to Grade 1 in primary schools. When this is not realized, internal efficiency shows the weakness of wastage in education. Therefore, when the education system fails to meet its

goal of producing graduates, wastage is manifested (Rashdan, 2005). Therefore, wastage is about learners who leave school before completing their studies. Hence, children who do not experience wastage complete their studies within the stipulated period. This ensures favorable promotion rates to the next level of education (Afolabi, 2006). The investigator considered wastage in ECE to be contributed by low promotion rates in children who transit from ECE to grade one in primary schools.

According to Alharbi (2015) promotion rates is an aspect of the internal efficiency of education, which shows the percentage at which the ECE children's cohort is transited to grade one in public primary schools. This is likely to affect the education of many children, which makes school administration be confronted with problem of finding out ways and to what degree promotion rates affect children and the schools. This is particularly where a school system has the average percentage of promotion rates result in terms of time which tell how long it will take the average child to complete the primary cycle. This occurs mostly in situation where rate of progress through the grades is reduced and the number of teachers decreases. This is because children who are not promoted to the next class tend to do the work of the grade they are in over again. Therefore, this means slow average progress, which results to production of over-age children in primary schools (Ayres, 2019). The World Bank (2004) opined that promotion policies should be carefully examined by adjusting standards, which should reflect pupils' abilities. Pupils' abilities are often affected by experience level of teachers. Less experience in teachers, contribute to low promotion rates of children, which could be resolved by providing more trained teachers so as to enhance promotion rates in primary schools (Otieno, 2015). According to Munawaru (2010), basic education is harbored by insufficient qualified teachers resulting to poor quality teaching and learning which lead to low promotion rates in mainstream primary schools. In Embu County, the challenge of mainstreaming professionally trained teachers makes it difficult to have successful promotion rates from ECE to primary schools. In this study, mainstreaming is an act of incorporating ECE teachers into primary section of schooling so as to have shared experiences in regard to professionalism of teachers to aid effectiveness in teaching children.

Several authors have defined mainstreaming as gradual reform rather than a frantic revolution, which is achieved through incremental changes in program goals, protocols of operations, and organizational cultures. Therefore, mainstreaming has been used in various fields including gender mainstreaming among many others (Sivakumar, 2016; Piccitto, 2002; Daly, 2005). This brings issues that have not been considered earlier to the considerations they deserve. Mainstreaming is a tool focusing on inclusion, which is as a result of proxy for advocacy of various issues, which include gender and human rights. This is because it is used to address issues concerning many older persons into the social development (World Population Prospects, 2002). Mainstreaming aims at bringing integration and inclusion of a particular group of people. This could be mainly socially, politically, economically, and in cultural life. In particular, the overall aim of mainstreaming is to achieve more equitable development within a society for the benefit of social groups. Mainstreaming therefore promotes greater attention to the specific concerns of a particular group, as well as more inclusive policymaking. In a school situation, mainstreaming places learners with differing abilities in a general education classroom depending on their abilities and skills, which can be developed through mentorship of a qualified teacher (Mgbam, 2019).

Nationwide, ECE is imperative in the progression of children of birth to eight years. A number of global frameworks have documented ECE to be vital in the continuity of education. For instance; Education for All (EFA) launched in Jomtien, Thailand 1990 noted the importance of Early Childhood Education and Development for all children as important for entry to primary schools. EFA goals placed ECE into mainstream educational system. Other important declarations on ECE include Dakar Framework of Action 2000, which put emphasis on escalating and refining ECE. Other frameworks with emphasis on ECE include, UN Convention on the Rights of Children 2001, Millennium Development Goals 2000 and Sustainable Development Goals 2015. This shows the importance of mainstreaming thus the need to give it priority in the various educational policies and programs, and plans both globally and in Kenya. Kenya has domesticated all these frameworks in its education system. Of special mention is SDGs goal 4 targets 4.2 which confirms that by 2030, countries need to declare that all school girls and boys need to advance high-valued early year's progression and child-care education in order to transit to other levels of learning. This requires professionally trained teachers. The researcher noted the importance of providing teachers with knowledge, skills, and understanding, which enable them to teach effectively. Hence, for teachers to be mainstreamed require that they possess adequate skills and competencies to enable them understand children who are entrusted to them in the best way possible.

However, many teacher preparation programs do not offer trainees adequate training to enable them offer considerable classroom management to enhance classroom behavior management (Allday, Neilsen-Gatti, & Hudson, 2013). According to Armstrong et al (2010), mainstreamed teachers require more skills and

competencies, particularly the attitudes and behaviors that positively influence learners to learn. These skills comprise ability to prepare and organize materials, ability to conduct daily lessons and practice procedures such as handling learners' behavior and designing a learning environment. This results to successful implementation of school programs. In addition, it encourages active participation of learners in a group or individual learning activities. This is in view to ensure the readiness of mainstream teachers for teaching, opportunities so as to get along with learners' education by adhering to policies, which require maximum support (Loreman et al., 2013). These calls for teachers' to have initiative to ruminate on what skills and competencies are important to enable them are prepared to achieve the delivery in the classroom (Rabi & Zulkefli, 2018). Hence, professional development should be a continuous education particularly for teachers who graduate and do not receive any special education training to enhance their professionalism (Mgbam, 2019). According to Mak (2016), professionalism involves high-level skills due to professional training. Hence, teacher professionalism when coupled with qualification determines how promotion rates in children are conducted (Mak, 2016). According to Musau and Abere (2015) when teachers are professionally qualified, they play a great part in determining promotion rates in children. This is ascertained by several studies that have been conducted which concluded that teacher professional qualifications greatly influence children's promotion rates (Maphoso & Mahlo, 2015; For & Wages, 2001; Zaslow, Tout, Maxwell, & Clifford, 2004). This equips them with adequate skills and competencies required in mainstream primary schools to enhance the promotion rates in ECE children. This study considered teachers' professionalism in regard to the adequacy of the skills particularly in regard to skills of handling transiting children to class one in primary schools.

## **2. Literature Review on Teacher Professional Qualifications in Early Childhood Education and its Influence on Promotion Rates**

Xu (2019) did a study on the experiences of male early childhood aspiring teachers in Texas, USA. The author adopted an exploratory research design and used sequential and snowball sampling to select 12 male pre-service teachers. Data were sought through interviews from 12 male pre-service teachers and data analyzed by open coding. The journalist found that male teachers positively influence young children through provision of most effective instruction and model masculine, male roles. The author recommended gender diversity and gender balance in ECE to be continuously emphasized in society so as to develop new perspective in ECE profession and to improve internal efficiency in ECE. While the journalist used exploratory design and got data through interview from 12 male pre-service ECE teachers who were sampled via sequential and snowball sampling, the current study adopted correlation research design and obtained data through questionnaire from 39 primary headteachers, 39 ECE teachers and 156 primary teachers who were simple randomly selected. Additionally, the researcher used document analysis guide and observation schedule to gather more data for triangulation purposes. Further, the reviewed study could not be generalized to Kenya, which is a developing country. The reviewed study did not focus on teacher professional qualification and its influence on internal efficiency.

Manasia, Ianos and Chicioreanu (2020) carried out a study on pre-service teacher preparedness for fostering education for sustainable development: an empirical analysis of central dimensions of teaching readiness, in Switzerland. The researchers used exploratory empirical cross-sectional research design based on quantitative approach and collected data by use of self-administered questionnaire through online using 312 undergraduate and postgraduate selected by criterion sampling method from 15 faculties of the University POLITEHNICA of Bucharest. Their finding showed that professional practice has a positive and statistically significant effect on all dimensions included in the projected model, professional knowledge ( $r=0.903$ ), self-management ( $r=0.874$ ) and professional engagement ( $r=0.889$ ). Tang' work (as cited in Manasia, Ianos and Chicioreanu, 2020) argued that although less investigated in studies regarding teacher readiness, the importance of self-management in the teaching profession should not be neglected. The reviewed study adopted exploratory empirical cross-sectional research design with self-administered questionnaire to get data from 312 undergraduate and postgraduate who were selected using criterion sampling from 15 faculties of the university POLITEHNICA.

The researcher got more data by observing physical infrastructures, which were available in schools, and the activities of children attached to the presence of these physical infrastructures. In addition, the investigator used document analysis guide such as attendance registers for both teachers and learners, admission registers and performance of children. These documents helped the researcher to get enrolments of children and teachers, staff present in schools, daily turn up of teachers and performance of children.

The author concluded that high levels of professional engagement result to highly effective self-management and auto-efficacy an indication of high promotion rates in ECE schools. In addition, the accumulation and deepening of professional knowledge as well as the practical experience leads to the improvement in learning leading to high promotion rates in children.

Nazer and Majlinda (2020) explored how preschool teachers in Kosovo understand inclusive early childhood education, a system that is undergoing transition and faces significant challenges. The writer used qualitative approach and collected data by use of interviews from 10 preschool teachers. Using thematic analysis, the journalist found that teachers have a common understanding of inclusion, but they lack proper skills and knowledge on adequate methods to work with special needs children. However, teachers see inclusion as an essential process and an excellent opportunity for all children. The reviewed study adopted qualitative approach; the finding cannot be generalized to Kenya because the study was done on inclusive education and in a developed country Kosovo in South East Europe. The study informed the researcher on the importance of using themes in analyzing data from the interviews.

In addition, the researcher used correlational research design with both qualitative and quantitative aspects and collected data by use of questionnaires from 39 public primary headteachers and 156 teachers, and 39 ECE teachers who were selected by use of purposive sampling. Further, the researcher got more information from document analysis guide and observation schedule. Further, the researcher analyzed quantitative data using descriptive and inferential statistics whereas qualitative data were analyzed thematically to fill the literature gap. Hence, the present study focused on teacher professional qualification in ECE and its influence on internal efficiency thereby adding literature to the existing body of knowledge. This study informed the current study on importance of using preschool teachers to get responses.

A study done by Chikwiri and Musiyiwa (2017) in districts of Goromonzi and Marondera sought to analyze the challenges and gaps faced by children when they transit from early childhood development to Grade one in primary schools in Goromonzi and Marondera districts in Zimbabwe. The author adopted qualitative and quantitative approaches solicited information through focus group discussion and documentary analysis, sampled 8 counselors, 10 education officials, 10 childcare workers, 2 chiefs, 20 ECD teachers and 10 school development committee members. The respondent was selected using purposive sampling technique. Data analysis was done according to emerging themes and descriptive statistics.

The writers' study findings revealed that participants were aware of the policy on transition and as such are likely not to follow what the policy advocates when teaching children. In addition, the study found that participants were aware of the importance of the transitioning period to the child. Further, the study revealed that lack of qualified teachers and expertise were cited as a challenge by participants. The authors noted the capacity building for teachers who are already in practice to be affected. The reviewed study used both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The reviewed study was conducted in primary schools in Zimbabwe and used informants who included counselors, education officials, child care workers, chiefs, ECD teachers and school management committee who were selected using purposively sampling technique. However, the researcher used correlational research design and got data by use of documentary analysis guide and observation schedule checklist. Additionally, the current study used questionnaires to get data from primary headteachers, primary teachers, and ECE teachers who were sampled using purposive sampling technique. The reviewed study informs the present study on the importance of collecting data using documentary analysis guide. The reviewed study informs the present study on the importance of analyzing qualitative data using themes and quantitative data using descriptive statistics. This study informs the current study on importance of using ECE teachers as informants for the study. Additionally, the reviewed study informs the present study on the importance of using purposive sampling technique in sampling respondents for the study. Further, the reviewed study informs the present study on the importance of analyzing data using emerging themes and descriptive statistics.

Teachers' educational qualifications and years of experience have influence on job commitment and academic achievement was confirmed by Aman (2018) study in Rivers State in Nigeria. The author aim was to determine the extent to which teachers' educational qualifications and years of experience influence their job commitment and academic achievement of secondary school students. In their survey, they used questionnaires to collect data from 380 teachers who represented 5% of 7619 teachers and 399 students who were chosen using Taro Yemane formula from the population of 17,493 students. The writers' study findings indicated high positive relationship existed between the dependent and independent variables of the study, which were found to be statistically significant. Hence, result revealed that higher educational qualification and years of experience have a great positive influence on the academic achievement of the secondary school students in Rivers State. The author argues that the relationship between teacher experience and student achievement is difficult to interpret since this variable is highly affected by market conditions or motivation to work during child rearing period. Hence, if less effective teachers are likely to leave the teaching profession, then, it may give the mistaken look that experience raises teacher effectiveness. The reviewed study though focused on teacher profession qualification did not focus on internal efficiency, which the present study considered.

The author recommended that teachers should be encouraged to attend seminars symposia, workshops inter-alia to gain more knowledge and skills for effective teaching while the bill of such programmes to be paid by the government. The reviewed study used survey with questionnaires to get information from teachers and students. However, the present study used correlation research design and collected data via questionnaire from primary headteachers and teachers and ECE teachers. The present study additionally got more data for the purpose of triangulation from documentary analysis guide and observation schedule. Additionally, the reviewed study was done in secondary schools in Rivers State in Nigeria whereas the present study was conducted in ECE schools in Kenya thereby filling literature gap. Further, the reviewed study was conducted in Nigeria; therefore, the present study was conducted in Kenya thereby filling the literature gap. The reviewed study though on teacher qualification is not related to how it influences internal efficiency hence the need for the present study, which focused on promotion rates an aspect of internal efficiency.

Ndijuye and Tandika (2019) did a study on timely promotion as a motivation factor for job performance among pre-primary schoolteachers in Tanzania. The authors used the reported high and low family socio-economic status criteria to select two districts (one rural and one urban) from where 8 primary schools were purposively selected from each district and random sampling used to select 4 and 8 ECE teachers and principals respectively from 32 primary school teachers. The writers used methodological triangulation to collect data using interviews to get information from 8 primary school principals and open-ended questionnaires to solicit information from 4 ECE teachers. The authors adopted interpretational analysis to analyze data. This study does not show research design that the study adopted therefore the current study used correlational research design and got data using with questionnaires (closed ended, open ended questionnaires and contingency) to get data on teacher professional qualifications and its influence on internal efficiency from 39 primary headteachers and 156 teachers and 39 ECE teachers who were purposively sampled to fill literature gap. Further, the researcher used document analysis guide and observation schedule as source of more information to enable triangulation of data thereby adding literature to the existing body of knowledge. The reviewed study informs the present study on the importance of using ECE teachers as respondents for the study.

The writers study revealed that timely promotion of ECE teachers significantly motivated and had great impact on children's learning, a hence enhances children's promotion rates. The author found that when there was appreciation and improvement of the working condition, ECE teachers' work morale, motivation and quality education improved in public primary schools, which resulted to improved performance, which is an indication of high promotion rates in ECE. The authors noted that other essential areas for policy and practice, which contribute to the effectiveness in impacting teacher motivation, are professional competence. The writers recommended the government of Tanzania to strategically focus on the quality and wellbeing of ECE teachers. In addition, they recommended that the ECE stakeholders in Tanzania to focus on ECE teachers by paying attention to what the ECE teachers by acknowledging their efforts. This would greatly motivate teachers; hence improve children's learning, progress and participation rates. This study did not focus on teacher professional qualification and its impact on promotion rates, which the researcher concentrated on to fill the knowledge gap.

The journalists' study further recommended the need for ECE stakeholders to create and provide suitable teaching and working conditions. This should include reduced class-size for positive teacher-children interaction and professional dignity. This will enhance impetus on promotion rates in ECE schools. The reviewed study was conducted in primary schools in Tanzania; while the current study was conducted in ECE schools in Kenya to fill the knowledge gap.

In their study on in-service teacher training and professional development of primary school teachers in Uganda, Nyarirwehi and Atuhumuze (2019) used descriptive survey research design to obtain the data through key informant interviews and questionnaires from a sample of 610 primary school teachers in the districts of Bushenyi, Rukungiri and Sheema. The authors' study revealed that majority of the teachers who had attended in-service training was diploma holders and had taught for 11–15 years but the teachers who had served long had taught for 16–20 years. The writers revealed that the odds of a teacher with a diploma, bachelors or post graduate degree having in-service teacher training were significantly higher than those of Grade III teacher with respective p-values less than 0.05. Hence, their findings found that teachers with 6–10 years of service were significantly less likely to have in-service teacher training than teachers with 1–5 years of service (OR=0.247,  $p < 0.05$ ) and no significant difference from teachers in the 1–5yrs category. This study explored in-service teacher training and professional development of primary schools teachers in Uganda with no linkage to the promotion rates for learners in their schools. However, the current study explored the influence of teachers' professional qualification on learners' promotion rates.

The journalists' study showed that a unit increase in age is associated with a 4.6% reduction in the odds of a

teacher having in-service teacher training ( $p < 0.05$ ) meaning that younger people had a higher likelihood of having in-service training. Hence, their study results showed that teachers in Rukungiri were significantly less likely to have in-service teacher training than teachers in Bushenyi with ( $OR = 0.528$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). The reviewed study adopted descriptive survey design with key informant interviews and questionnaires to get data from 610 primary schools teachers.

The writers' study showed that upgrading teachers' academic qualifications was the most considered criteria in-service teacher training colleges, which enable teachers to upgrade their academic qualifications. This makes them become better in provision of education of children. The authors' study noted that promotion in administrative positions of the in-service trained teachers increase ECE teachers' professionalism and motivation which help improve their teaching abilities hence become good example for other teachers and children. The writers' observed that professionalism is measured in terms of qualification for promotion. They also noted that in-service teacher training provides opportunity for teachers to further their education, which determines promotion acquisition as enabler of a teacher to utilize different teaching techniques, which gives them a competitive edge when applying for promotion. The current study focused teacher professional qualifications in ECE and how it influences promotion rates in children.

The journalists' noted that in-service trainings make teachers to become better especially if they strictly apply the gained knowledge and skills. For instance, the writes' noted that pupils had better relationships and were more sociable with in-service trained teachers because in-service trained teachers encourage them to build teams, which give success to their academic work. In addition, authors noted that in-service trained teachers who are talented in co-curricular activities are always eager to assist pupils in various games, music, and scouting, handwork such as making carpets, baskets, gardening and table mats during their free time which help them socialize and make groups that help them play different games according to their taste. This study informed the current study on the importance of using primary teachers as respondents and questionnaires as research tool for the study.

Journalists' study revealed that in-service trained teachers cause disappointment in their professional discipline in regard to leadership. This is as a result of teachers upgrading to the same level of qualification as their headteachers. Hence, they become indiscipline by refusing to teach in lower classes, which they used to teach before the training. This was attributed to the introduction of thematic curriculum, which emphasizes on teaching infants in vernacular. This was shown through resentment towards this method with a preference to use the English language in teaching. In addition, in-service trained teachers portray unhealthy competition and in other cases disrespect for authority which have been instigated between teachers and their supervisors. Hence, teachers demand immediate promotion and salary increment after completion of their training and if this fail result to stubbornness and indiscipline of teachers. In addition, teachers' good qualifications make teachers feel that they should be promoted on the job even when vacant positions are not available. The current study explored the extent to which the teacher professional qualifications affects promotion rates since the ECE teachers handle only ECE class, there is hardly any competing interest even after one upgrades since one can only handle a class being promoted up to class three hence no possibility of competing for leadership. This study informed the researcher on importance of using questionnaires in getting information from the respondents

Authors noted that in-service trained teachers develop a superiority complex and often overlook other teachers especially those without training. This resentment was aggravated when particularly in the cases where trained and untrained teachers earn the same salary. In addition, writers noted that after in-service teacher training, most teachers start a pursuit of transition from classroom work to school administration. This results to suffocating the fulfillment of professional ethics such as schemes of work and lesson plans preparation hence renders in-service trained teachers inefficient. Therefore, ECE level being the lowest level of education, hardly underrate other teachers and instead in most cases the ECE teachers are the ones who are underrated hence suffer inferiority complex, which can interfere with the promotion rates of ECE children. The teacher professional qualification is key to the learners' promotion rates and not necessarily about the teachers competing for positions and promotions.

The writers' study showed that the in-service teacher training is not a priority for the education ministry since teachers participate in training as they attend to their teaching duties hence no completion of the syllabus. This is because the in-service trained teachers at times use classroom time to attend to their studies, hold discussions, answer assignments and leaving little time for actual teaching in their stipulated classes and subjects which yield to underperformance and low internal efficiency in schools. The researcher did not explore whether the ECE teachers were under studies for upgrading their qualification. However, teachers were asked to indicate whether they had skills on special education which could help in assisting all children in the ECE classes including those

with special needs to enhance promotion rates.

Authors concluded that in-service teacher training has its largest influence on upgrading teachers' academic qualifications and improving their attitude towards their job. In addition, they view in-service teacher training as a major player in equipping, broadening and deepening teachers' knowledge and skills, which in turn fosters an increased teachers' competence, reliability, and responsibility. Further, they concluded that the in-service trained teachers are more professionally grounded than untrained teachers which aids in building a qualified teaching workforce, whose effect on the teaching and learning is strongly felt. Whereas in-service teacher training has been praised for stimulating professional development, it does little to provide good education. This is due to resource constraints such personal behavior challenges such as stubbornness, disobedience to leadership. This study informs the current study on the importance ECE teachers' professional qualification since this can influence promotion rates particularly if the teachers attend in-service training courses as they teach in ECE schools.

Writers recommended learning environments within education institutions to be made more conducive for the teaching-learning process. In addition, they recommended proper sensitization of teachers on the importance of the training and its effect on learners' attainment of education. Further, they recommended training approach to be reviewed and revised so as to include a pre-training needs analysis, and training and post-training evaluation to assess the impact of the training in teaching-learning processes. This study informs the current study on the importance of guidance and counseling for both ECE teachers and ECE children on matters of participation in teaching and learning to so as to enhance promotion rates. The reviewed study was conducted in primary schools in Uganda; therefore, the current study was conducted in ECE schools in Kenya to fill knowledge gap.

A study done by Bietebbeck, Ericsson and Wamalwa (2019) in Kenya and Tanzania sought to find out the effects of preschool attendance on children's school progression and cognitive skills in Kenya and Tanzania in East Africa. Bietenbeck, Ericsson and Wamalwa adopted cross-sectional household surveys and uses novel data from large-scale household surveys of children literacy and numeracy skills, which also collect retrospective information on preschool attendance. The study found that in both countries children who go to preschool tend to enroll in primary school late and thus fall behind in terms of grades completed at early ages. However, once in school they progress through grades faster and at ages 3–16 have completed about one and half more months of schooling than their same-aged peers who did not attend preschool. The reviewed study adopted cross-sectional survey and used novel data to get information on progression of children of 3–16 years of age. However, the researcher used correlational research design with questionnaires to get information from 39 primary headteachers and 156 teachers, and 39 ECE teachers who were purposively sampled from 39 pre-primary schools in Embu County, Kenya. Also, the researcher got additional data from documentary analysis guide and observation schedule to enable triangulation of data. Additionally, the researcher used content analysis in analyzing qualitative data and quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics to fill the knowledge gap.

Implementation of early childhood development education policy faces various challenges. Wangila (2017) aimed to scrutinize the challenges facing the implementation of early childhood development and education policy in Bungoma County, Kenya. The author used mixed research design with questionnaires, Focus Group Discussion (FGD), observation schedule and document analysis to solicit information from 9 Quality Assurance and Standard Officers (QUASOs), 27 headteachers, 81 ECE teachers and 27 non-teaching staff from selected public primary schools. Wangila used descriptive statistics to analyze quantitative data and content analysis to analyze qualitative data. The present study sought to explore how teacher profession qualification in ECE influenced participation rates in children.

While the reviewed study used mixed research design, there were no quantitative findings regarding the challenges facing the implementation of early childhood development and education policy in such schools; however, the researcher adopted correlational research design with questionnaires to get data from 39 ECE teachers, 39 public primary headteachers and 156 teachers who were purposively sampled. The observation schedule and document analysis guide were also utilized by the researcher for more information to fill knowledge gap. Additionally, the researcher analyzed data using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) whereby quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics and qualitative data analyzed by use of themes thereby adding literature to the existing body of knowledge. The reviewed study did not focus on teacher professional qualifications in ECE and how it influences internal efficiency which the researcher focused on to fill literature gap. This study informed the researcher on importance of using questionnaires, observation schedule and document analysis guide in getting data. Additionally, the reviewed study informs the present study on importance of using headteachers and ECE teachers as respondents for the study. Further, this

study informs the current study on importance of using descriptive statistics in analyzing quantitative data and content analysis in analyzing qualitative data.

Odieki (2020) did a descriptive survey on the teacher factors influencing children's transition to class one in Nakuru County, Kenya with an aim to establish how teacher factors, curriculum factors and infrastructural factors affect children's transitioning to class one. The writer used 92 respondents selected using the table proposed by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) from a population of 29 headteachers and 87 class one teacher from a sample of 29 public primary schools which were selected using purposive sampling technique. The writer found that teacher factors significantly influenced successful transition of the learners into primary schools. Additionally, the study found that teaching methods, teacher availability and teacher experience in handling transitioning pupils were important for learner transition into primary school. The author study recommended the education stakeholders in the county should redouble their efforts to ensure that experienced and well-trained teachers preferable with some early childhood development orientation are placed at class one to handle transitioning learners. Data was analyzed by use of statistical analysis using frequencies and percentages and results presented in tables. While the study used descriptive survey research design and was conducted in class one, it is not clear how many headteachers and class one teachers were sampled separately for the study. Therefore, the current study used correlational research design to conduct study in pre-primary schools which were stratified randomly sampled and got information via questionnaire from 39 headteachers, 39 ECE teachers and 156 primary teachers who were purposively sampled to fill the literature gap. Although the reviewed study was focused on teacher factors which influenced transition of children to class one, it never brought out the factor of teacher professional qualification which the present study focused on to fill the literature gap. The reviewed study informs the researcher on the importance of using statistical analysis using frequencies and percentages and results presented in tables.

Achieng (2018) did a study on influence of school environment on teacher retention in early childhood development centres in Nyatike, Migori County, Kenya to establish the influence of school environment such as work conditions, benefits, management style, and professional progression on teacher retention in early childhood. The writer used descriptive research design with questionnaires and interview schedules to get responses from preschool teachers (72 from public and 60 from private schools) and preschool headteachers (36 from public and 30 from private schools) who were purposively selected. Data was analyzed using SPSS and presented in tables. The present study focused on teacher professional qualification in ECE and its influence on internal efficiency aspect of promotion rates.

The journalists' study findings revealed that there was need to find ways of retaining the teachers in the profession as this will assist to reduce the expenses of recruiting new teachers. The study concluded that workload remains the most important factor influencing teachers' decision to leave the profession. The reviewed study was carried out in private and public preschools and used descriptive research design and used questionnaires and interviews to get information from preschool headteachers and teachers. However, the present study used correlational research design. The researcher also got information through questionnaires from primary headteachers and teachers and ECE teachers thereby adding literature to the existing body of knowledge. Additionally, the researcher used document analysis guide and observation schedule to get information to fill the gap. Additionally, the present study was done in pre-primary schools attached to public primary schools only without considering private ones since they were under different management. The reviewed study informs the present study on the importance of questionnaires in collecting data from respondents. Additionally, this study informs the researcher on the importance of carrying out a study on teacher professional qualification in ECE and its influence on internal efficiency. Further, the reviewed study informed the researcher on importance of using headteachers as respondents of the study. Use of purposive sampling in selecting respondents for the study informed the current study.

In their descriptive study done in Northern Zone, Nakuru County, Kenya, Ondieki and Mweru (2020) established how teacher factors and instructional factors affect children's transitioning into primary school. Ondieki and Mweru used questionnaires and interview schedule to get information from 92 respondents who were selected via Krejcie and Morgan (1970) computation from purposively selected 29 schools. Their findings revealed that teacher factors significantly influenced successful transition of the learners into primary school particularly teaching methods, teacher availability and teacher experience in handling transitioning pupils were important for learner transition into primary school. The journalists recommended that the education stakeholders in the county should redouble their efforts to ensure that experienced and well-trained teachers preferably with some early childhood development orientation are placed at class one to handle transitioning learners. Whereas the reviewed study adopted descriptive study and used questionnaires and interview schedule to get information from 92

respondents selected by Krejcie and Morgan (1970). The present study used correlation research design and used document analysis and observation schedule to get information. Additionally, the current study got responses from 39 primary headteachers, 39 ECE teachers and 156 primary teachers who were selected purposively via questionnaires to fill the literature gap. The reviewed study never focused on the aspect of teacher professional qualification and the aspects of internal efficiency such as promotion rates in this study which the researcher considered in finding out how teacher professional qualification in ECE influences internal efficiency. This study informs the present study on importance of using questionnaires in getting data from respondents.

### 3. Methodology of the Study

The study adopted correlational research design to explore how mainstreaming of teacher professional development influences particularly promotion rates, an aspect of internal efficiency in public primary schools in Embu County, Kenya. The study targeted 381 public primary headteachers, 3951 primary teachers, and 483 ECE teachers in 381 public primary schools in Embu County, Kenya. The investigator used purposive sampling technique to select 39 public primary headteachers and 156 primary teachers from 39 stratified sampled primary schools. Additionally, simple random sampling technique was used to select 39 ECE teachers from 39 ECE schools attached to public primary schools sampled through stratified sampling techniques. Data on how mainstreaming of teacher professionalism on promotion rates was derived from questionnaires for primary headteachers and teachers, and ECE teachers. Primary teacher questionnaire was utilized to get data on teacher professional qualification. Additionally, more information was got from documentary analysis guide to enable triangulation of data. Hence more information was got through analysis of documents such as teacher register so as to show staff present in primary schools. Staff attendance register showed presence of teachers to show whether teaching was effective or not. Personnel records showed the number of teachers in schools and their adequacy. Quantitative data was analyzed using mean, standard deviation and inferential statistics. Qualitative data was analyzed by identifying key themes and sub-themes in line with teacher professionalism and influence on promotion rates. Hence, themes were identified and codes assigned to them, and classification of themes respectively.

Ethical concerns for the study included use of consent form to enhance privacy and confidentiality of data collected and respondents or source of data. In addition, ethical clearance was obtained from the University of Nairobi Ethics and Research Committee, while a research permit was obtained from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI).

### 4. Presentation and Discussion of Research Findings on Teacher Professional Qualification and Promotion Rates in Public Primary Schools

This section focuses on responses from primary headteachers, primary teachers and pre-primary teachers on how teacher professional qualification in ECE influences internal efficiency aspect of promotion rates in public primary

The researcher sought to find out from headteachers whether pre-primary teachers teach learners in grade one with the aim of trying to establish whether these children grade 1 experienced understaffing which could imply less qualified teachers resulting to inefficiency in primary schools. The study results are presented in Table 1

Table 1. Adequacy of trained teachers in pre-primary and promotion rates of children

	Pre-primary teachers teaching lower primary		Lower primary teachers teaching pre-primary	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	21	56.8	28	75.7
No	16	43.2	9	24.3
Total	37	100	37	100

Results in Table 1 show that the majority 21(56.8%) of headteachers showed that pre-primary teachers do teach pupils in grade 1. Additionally, majority 28(75.7%) of them headteachers specified that lower primary teachers teach pre-primary schools. This suggests that in specific schools there is inadequacy of trained teachers which lead to headteachers requesting for pre-primary teachers mainly diploma holders in early childhood development to train grade one. In addition, this denotes that pre-primary schoolteachers are well trained to deliver in lower primary school particularly diploma holders in pre-primary education. In addition, it implies that there is incorporation in instruction between pre-primary schoolteachers and lower primary teachers in majority of schools which fetches connotation to mainstreaming of pre-primary schools.

Moreover, this could denote inadequacy of qualification of teachers in preschools can upset promotion rates and transition rates in kids.

Table 2. Teachers' academic qualifications

	Pre-primary Teachers		Primary teachers		Headteachers	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
O-level	3	8.3	5	3.4	0	0
Certificate	12	33.3	34	23.4	0	0
Diploma	10	27.8	66	45.5	12	32.4
Degree	5	13.9	30	20.7	13	35.1
Masters	6	16.7	10	6.9	12	32.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>		<b>145</b>		<b>37</b>	

Demographic data demonstrates that somewhat less than a third (27.8%) of pre-primary teachers had diploma which indicates that a decent number of them could handle class one successfully. The present study findings harmonizes with Nyarirwehi and Atuhumuze's (2019) study which exposed that in-service teacher training permitted teachers upgrade their academic qualification to make them become better in providing education to children of primary schools in Uganda. These study conclusions concurs with a study conducted in Zimbabwe by Majoko (2018) who establish that there was inconsistency in revelation to comprehensive theory and practice in mainstreamed primary schools and recommended that pre-service and in-service training be adequately provided to enable teachers be able to teach in integrated primary schools. Documentary analysis guide showed that teacher professional qualification in pre-primary and primary schools was inadequate. This is in agreement with Nyarirwehi and Atuhumuze (2019) who found that teachers in Uganda were given in-service training to enable them upgrade their academic qualification for better provision of education to children.

The researcher sought to find out whether pre-primary schoolchildren have experienced low promotion rates due to inadequacy of qualified teachers. Results are as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Children in pre-primary have experienced low promotion rates in school due to inadequacy of qualified trained teachers

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	25	69.4
No	11	30.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>100</b>

The results presented in Table 3 indicate that majority 25 (69.4%) of headteachers noted that children in pre-primary have experienced low participation rates in pre-primary schools due to inadequately of qualified trained teachers. This suggests that pre-primary teachers were inadequately qualified which affected promotion rates. From the document analysis, the attendance registers exposed that majority 15 (41.6%) of staff existing in schools were inadequate. This infers that there were low promotion rates of children in schools since teachers were insufficient. This study finding concurs with Odieki (2020) who established that teacher aspects considerably predisposed positive transition of the learners into primary schools and that teaching approaches, teacher availability and teacher knowledge in handling transitioning children were significant for learner transition to primary school. Similarly, Bietebbeck, Ericsson and Wamalwa's (2019) study revealed that children who go to pre-primary schools tend to register in primary school late and thus lag behind in terms of grades finished at early ages.

The researcher sought to find out from pre-primary teachers whether education helps to have high quality teaching due to adequate qualification of pre-primary teachers in pre-primary class which aimed to establish promotion rates of children. The findings are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Whether education helps to have high quality teaching in your pre-primary school class due to adequate qualification of pre-primary teachers which fosters promotion rates in children

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	32	88.9
No	4	11.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>100</b>

Concerning whether education helps to have high quality teaching in pre-primary school class due to adequate qualification of pre-primary teachers which fosters promotion rates, Table 4 indicate that 32 (88.9%) of pre-primary teachers exposed that education aids to have high quality teaching in pre-primary schools. This infers that a teacher with adequate qualification has significant knowledge on content to be taught which suggests that the teaching is of high quality. The finding is in line with Ugandan study by Nyarirwehi and Atuhumuze (2019) which discovered that in-service trained teachers who are adequately qualified are encouraged to teach content to satisfaction which results to high efficiency in pre-primary schools. This study findings contrast a study by Brief (2018) who shown that pre-primary teachers in Kirinyaga, Nyamira, Nairobi and Nyeri Counties in Kenya were unable to deliver competently in pre-primary schools owing to inadequate skills which critically affected transition rates of children.

The researcher sought to find out from primary teachers whether they were adequately skilled in handling learners transiting to primary school with the aim of establishing the successful promotion rates of learners. The study findings are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Skills of pre-primary school teacher and transition to pre-primary school to primary school

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	73	50
Agree	56	38.9
Undecided	8	5.6
Disagree	4	2.8
Strongly disagree	4	2.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 5 shows that majority 129 (88.9%) of primary teachers agreed that they were adequately trained on handling children transiting from pre-primary school to primary school. This suggests that transition rate in pre-primary kids was reasonable. This contradicts the finding by Nyarirwehi and Atuhumuze's (2019) study which revealed that the in-service teacher training is not a priority for the education ministry since teachers participate in training as they attend to their teaching duties hence no completion of the syllabus. Similarly, the findings contradict Nazer and Majlinda's (2020) study results which revealed that teachers lack proper skills and knowledge on adequate methods to work with children with special needs.

The researcher sought to find out whether there is an association between teacher professional qualification and internal efficiency by use of a Pearson product-moment correlation. The findings are shown in Table 6.

Table 6. A Pearson product-moment correlation results for teacher professional qualification and internal efficiency

		Internal Efficiency	Teacher professional qualification
Internal Efficiency	Pearson Correlation	1	.672*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	37	37
Teacher professional qualification	Pearson Correlation	.672*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	37	37

Note. \*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 (2-tailed).

In relation to Table 6 there is a strong positive correlation between teacher professional qualification and internal efficiency in public primary schools ( $r=.672, n=37, p<.05$ ). This inferred that teacher profession qualification

influences internal efficiency in terms of promotion rates. This showed that the more the teachers are qualified, the more the promotion rates which allows high transition rates in kids. The findings also denote that teacher professional qualification increased promotion rates by 67.2%, which resulted to high internal efficiency.

## 5. Conclusion

There is inadequacy of trained teachers in pre-primary and primary schools. This shown by the fact that headteachers do request pre-primary teachers to teach in grade one and likewise primary teachers are asked to teach pre-primary classes. This affect promotion rates in ECE children. Nevertheless, teachers argue that they were adequately trained to handle transiting children, which lead to relatively substantial transition rates and high internal efficiency. This portrays that the more teachers are trained the high the promotion rates hence high internal efficiency. The fewer teachers are qualified the lower the internal efficiency in primary schools due to deliver in class which results to children's poor masterly of content taught. This further which caused few children to be promoted to the next grade.

## 6. Recommendations

The study recommends that headteachers in collaboration with County government, Teachers Service Commission to ensure that pre-primary and primary teachers are adequately trained with relevant skills to enable them handle adequately transitioning children from pre-primary schools to primary schools.

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