



Stakeholders' Perceptions of the Factors Affecting the Teaching and Learning of Early Childhood Development Learners in Marondera Urban



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Abstract

This study aimed at establishing stakeholders' perceptions of factors affecting the teaching and learning of Early Childhood Development (ECD) children in Marondera Urban, Zimbabwe. The study adopted the case study design to provide a detailed understanding of the views voiced by respondents, who included school heads, ECD teachers, and SDC members who represented the community. Questionnaires were administered on ECD teachers while school heads and SDC members were interviewed. Documents on staffing and enrolment were accessed to substantiate claims made by respondents in questionnaires and interviews. A total population of 156 respondents was of interest to this study. The researchers selected 8 primary school heads, 56 ECD teachers and 10 School Development Committee (SDC) members adding up to 74 sampled respondents selected through random sampling. Some of the major findings were that in some instances, unqualified ECD teachers were being recruited as highlighted by most respondents. Most of school heads provided appropriate supervision and guidance to ECD teachers and this positively affected the teaching and learning. Poor remuneration for ECD teachers was negatively affecting the teaching and learning of ECD learners although in some instances NGOs chipped in with some incentives to motivate the ECD teachers. Since the teacher-pupil ratio was higher than what was expected, coupled with the shortage of resources such as furniture, textbooks, workbooks, and other teaching and learning materials at school, this hindered effective teaching and learning of ECD children. The study recommended that there should be more training to ECD teachers so that they become professional personal in the teaching and learning of ECD children to avoid developmental delays. There should be workshops that have to be held at ECD centres especially on the development of ECD children mostly to the para-professional to gain experience. School heads should continue assessing, monitoring, and supervising their ECD teachers to maintain guidance and for the better development of ECD children.

Keywords: Stakeholders; Teaching and learning; Early childhood development; Learners; Urban.

1. Introduction

The ECD programme in Zimbabwe is a post-independence initiative that was introduced to correct the imbalances related to unequal opportunities between the whites and blacks. It was meant to develop an even start to young learners through education and to empower all learners regardless of colour, social status and religious orientation (Chimonyo *et al.*, 2011). The initiative entailed that there be smooth sailing activities in the centres through the promulgated policies.

There are a lot of initiatives that were adopted and implemented in the Zimbabwean education system afforded to the young children. For example, the system adopted a new curriculum, and a lot of innovations came into play. ECD teaching and learning was implemented to build the foundation for better learning and better future for the

children from the age of zero to eight years. However, these initiatives seem to be facing huddles as reflected in the numbers of dropouts and failure rates, among others, in the primary schools (Morrison, 2000).

ECD education, like any other level of education in Zimbabwe, is meant to promote the holistical development of ECD children, thus children should acquire and develop skills such as language, cognitive, social, emotional, and physical skills. Also, ECD children should be able to take care of themselves, for instance, through bathing, eating, dressing, to mention just a few. All these skills allow ECD children to develop equal opportunities for registering, participating, and learning effectively through the mainstream school system. Thus, no discrimination, stigmatisation and neglect or otherwise, should be perpetrated even on children due to special needs as a result physical or mental challenges, blindness, deafness, dampness, albinism, or downs syndrome, among others. However, there appears a situation whereby some communities still shun some learners who exhibit these special needs (Mendis, 2006).

In the Rhodesia, now Zimbabwean, Statutory Instruments (S1) of 1973 and 1979 were designed to discriminate among native black children while at the same time producing and providing their white counterparts with better skills, knowledge and attitudes that allowed them to start their education programmes with enough cognitive and motor skills and tools to participate in education (Zvobgo, 1999). Currently, in Zimbabwe, it appears not all the learners are being equipped with such skills as some go into higher grades without any knowledge of basic concepts. In Zimbabwe, the government and other private sector players teamed up to make sure that there are ECD centres in the country to accommodate and allow the learning and development of the young learners. The resultant ECD programme entailed having ECD 'A' and ECD 'B' classes. ECD 'A' accommodates children three to five years and ECD 'B' from five to six years (Chimonyo *et al.*, 2011). The ECD centres should have classrooms, play centres, toys as well as ECD teachers and caregivers.

Accordingly, these policies were put in place for the implementation of ECD centres to make sure these were not randomly done. For example, all the ECD centres were to be registered to ensure that quality education was provided as expected ages (Mariga *et al.*, 2014). The ECD teachers were to be qualified personnel, who knew how to work with young learners and knew their developmental stages and their uniqueness in their learning process. For that reason, universities and colleges for example, the Zimbabwe Open University (ZOU), Great Zimbabwe University (GZU), and others introduced the Bachelor of Education degree in ECD programmes for teachers.

In Zimbabwe, the ECD programme officially existed since time immemorial, and it was referred to as Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) (Morrison, 2000). However, despite this, the planners, and the teachers, regardless of their views and knowledge on child development programmes, still faced challenges in designing and implementing the curriculum, especially when people considered the teacher preparation programme culture (Nziramasanga Commission, 1999). For that reason, in 2015, UNICEF provided funding for the training of ECD teachers in various tertiary institutions, including ZOU, to alleviate ECD teacher shortages.

It was seen to be significant for the children, who normally left home for formal education, to enter mainstream education after having gone through the ECD programmes. It was important that child preparation and care principles were introduced into the teacher training standards and expected skill in school going ages (Mariga *et al.*, 2014). A lot of ECD centres were, therefore, introduced and the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education introduced a policy that all ECD centres should be allocated to a school near it to allow for constant supervision and monitoring (Carr, 2001; Chimonyo *et al.*, 2011). Thus, according to Zvobgo (1999), out of the policies from the 1997 Education Act, post independent Zimbabwe experienced the mushrooming of ECD centres, higher enrolments in primary schools and private sector schools. For instance, many ECD centres were registered during the first five years' development plan of 1980-85 in Zimbabwe.

However, due to the rapid expansion of education in general, there have been overwhelming evidence that the quality of education has been affected. Some have blamed the quality of teachers and shortage of learning resources. There being no conclusive evidence to what is obtaining in the ECD centres (Chimonyo *et al.*, 2011), the study therefore, sought to establish stakeholders' perceptions of factors affecting teaching and learning of ECD learners in Marondera Urban.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Though most of the stakeholders are there to assist in the learning and development of ECD learners, there appear some challenges affecting, hindering, and disturbing the teaching and learning of ECD children in ECD centres. It is the purpose of this study to answer the question: What are stakeholders' perceptions of the factors affecting the teaching and learning of ECD learners in Marondera Urban?

1.2. Objectives

The study was guided by the following objectives:

1. establish teacher related factors affect the teaching and learning of ECD learners
2. find out the resources needed at ECD centres for effective teaching and learning
3. ascertain the how socio-economic factors are affecting the teaching and learning of ECD children
4. establish extent to which stakeholders are included in the teaching and learning of ECD children
5. assess the school policies in place to facilitate the teaching and learning of ECD learners

1.3. Research Questions

The research aimed at addressing the following research questions:

1. How do teacher related factors affect the teaching and learning of ECD learners?
2. What are the resources needed at ECD centres for effective teaching and learning?

3. What are the socio-economic factors affecting the teaching and learning of ECD children?
4. To what extent are stakeholders included in the teaching and learning of ECD children?
5. What school policies are in place to facilitate the teaching and learning of ECD learners?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Teacher Related Factors Affecting the Teaching and Learning of ECD Learners

Some of the studies reviewed show that there were several factors that affect the teaching and learning of ECD learners towards ECD teachers. For instance, a study by Loughran (2006) asserts that ECD teachers should be professionals; they should have professional experience to deliver the correct message to the ECD children during teaching and learning. Teaching should be regarded as a profession and it requires skills, knowledge and maintain the continuing of learning in ECD children (Cheruiyot and Kosgei, 2008). With the human capital flight in Zimbabwe, as teachers leave for greener pastures, there could a shortage of teachers in the schools as well as ECD centres.

A study by Young (2012) in the New Zealand, established that the shortage of qualified ECD teachers in ECD centres was one of the factors that affected the teaching and learning of ECD children. This was so because ECD teachers facilitated children's play, learning as well as their development. Also, ECD teachers allocate play time. They watch ECD children as they develop and support children's interactions and ensuring safety. New Zealand and Zimbabwe differ in terms of human resources mobilisation. It was expected that New Zealand should not encounter any challenges in the training and retaining of qualified ECD staff. In Zimbabwe, of late there has been rumour of many teachers roaming the streets without employment (Mpofu and Shumba, 2012). Therefore, there is need to establish the extent to which the shortage of teachers in Zimbabwe is affecting the teaching and learning of ECD learners in ECD centres.

Young (2012), established that for ECD teachers to be aware of all these activities, they should be aware of the developmental stages for ECD children, how they should interact during learning and that they should not be compered since they have their uniqueness. The question that needs to be addressed is whether teachers trained in Zimbabwe cover all these aspects to accord them the opportunity to teach effectively.

Another study by Cheruiyot and Kosgei (2008), also looked at teacher training and qualification. He posits that teaching is a learned and learning profession, every ECD teacher should be a learner. Realising that the ECD teachers needed top continuously improve on their teaching methodologies and content delivery and the fact that it is possible to send the teachers to training colleges and universities. The Zimbabwean Government has put in place measures to enhance continuing professional development for its teachers (Cheruiyot and Kosgei, 2008). However, how effective are the teacher qualifications obtained by these Zimbabwean trained teachers to accord them the ability to teach effectively. Another study by Stronge (2014) revealed that untrained ECD teachers in ECD centres are neither likely to provide wholesome curriculum nor be effective in their teaching activities. As implemented by the Zimbabwean Government, training ECD teachers was likely to improve the quality education in ECD centres for ECD programmes.

2.2. Resources That are Needed at ECD Centres

A study by Zoshi and Jennifer (2017) established that the importance of early learning is entrenched in the second target of Sustainable Development Goal 4, which seeks to ensure that by 2030, all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre- primary education, so that they will be ready for formal, learning, so as to improve learning and education outcomes as well as the efficiency of education system (UNICEF, 2018).

As discovered by some studies, play is the most important way in which ECD children gain essential knowledge and skills (Zoshi and Jennifer, 2017). Education Commission (2016), asserts that ECD children's learning becomes successfully through play. There is a key element to consider in the learning of ECD children thus, playful learning is a central to quality ECD pedagogy and education. Therefore, ECD environment should be equipped with multiple resources including computers, building blocks, colouring books to mention just a few. These resources are used in the classroom and are indoor play materials. Also, ECD teachers should have ECD textbooks as well as workbooks for ECD children. Added to that, the ECD centre should have an outdoor play area, for this reason, play opportunities and environments that promote play, exploration and hands-on learning are at core of effective ECD learning programmes. For example, swings, slides, see-saw to mention just a few. On the same note, according to UNICEF (2005), expected space for each child in indoor should be 1.5m² and for outdoor is 2m² per child.

Another study by Briggs *et al.* (2012) found out that resources were still a challenge in some other ECD centres. For instance, the new curriculum textbooks and workbooks, projected media such as computers, outdoor play materials such as slides, swings and playhouses were still out of reach of many schools. Also, some ECD centres had inadequate space, for instance space, classrooms had limited space, outdoor play areas space was also limited, and this deprived ECD learners learning and acquiring skills (Briggs *et al.*, 2012).

As such, it can be seen that resources are important in as much as they help promote the growth and development of ECD children, and these help to reduce unnecessary illness as ECD children grow free from such diseases as heart problem, kidney failure and obesity, motivate learners since they will be playing while learning and give a good foundation to learners (UNICEF, 2005).

2.3. Socio-economic Factors Affecting the Teaching and Learning of ECD Children

In a study by [Zarina et al. \(2012\)](#), in Pakistan, it was discovered that there were several socio-economic factors that affected the learning and development of learners. For instance, shortage of funds for transport. The source of travel had negative effects as it caused learners to travel on foot for long distances for example, more than 5 kilometers before they reached the school. By so doing ECD children arrived at school tired, and this caused them not to pay attention or sleep during lessons. Also, parents' education affected the educational development of learners as parents were not taking children's education seriously. They even could not assist with the resources needed thus unable to complying with the school requirements ([Zarina et al., 2012](#)).

In the same study, the sources of income were noted to affect the growth and development of ECD learners. As reviewed by [Zarina et al. \(2012\)](#), in Pakistan, most of the students of middle class were average achievers, lower class learners remained low achievers while high-class learners were best achievers. Hence, this shows that the source of income negatively affected the teaching and learning of learners from poor backgrounds.

According to a study by [Fleishch \(2008\)](#), parental socio-economic status determined many things about early childhood development and education. For instance, how one view the world, how much they earned, how often they ate, to mention just a few. These, according to [Fleishch \(2008\)](#), had a bearing on the teaching and learning processes at an ECD centre. As [Fleishch \(2008\)](#) discovered, poverty was one of the major challenges which caused the ECD children to be discriminated and isolated against, thus impeding progress in the teaching and learning process.

In South Africa, according to a study by [UNICEF \(2010\)](#), most of the children did not have access to early education programmes as many parents and families could not afford to pay school fees. The same findings were established by [Hyde and Kabiru \(2003\)](#), thus agreeing with [UNICEF \(2009\)](#) that children raised in poverty tended to miss school, more often because of illness, stress, and depression. Of note is the fact that South Africa is well ahead of Zimbabwe in terms of economic advancement. The situations, therefore, might tend to be different warranting a study of a similar nature in Zimbabwe, more so in Marondera Urban.

In the study by [UNICEF \(2018\)](#), results indicated that levels of stress in the family had also been shown to correlate economic circumstances that bring about inefficiency in the teaching and learning processes. Young children who grew up in a family with low income were more likely to have emotional and behavioural problems, delay in cognitive development and not able to socialise and interact with others. These children, as they will be learning may not be able to cope with others as the levels of anxiety will be high. This affects the growth and development of ECD learners ([Fleishch, 2008](#)).

In other studies, by [Ross and Mählick \(1990\)](#) and [Fuller \(1985\)](#) it was ascertained that education programmes were fully implemented depending on level of family education. The more the families were educated, the more these families would give additional material and instructional support to school programmes. However, this might need further research as some parents and families who are already affluent see no reason to send their children to school hence lacking support for the nearby schools ([Hyde and Kabiru, 2003](#)).

One other basic requirement for the success of teaching and learning is parent support. A study by [Moyo et al. \(2012\)](#) on parents' support of ECD programmes established that most parents were in support of ECD programmes. The study found out that parents manifested positive attitudes towards ECD programmes. The parents in the study sent their children in huge numbers to ECD centres and were willing to contribute through fees payment and some even had to accompany their children to ECD centres. The study then concluded that parental support was a necessity in the success of the teaching and learning programmes in ECD centres ([Moyo et al., 2012](#)).

2.4. Inclusion of Stakeholders in the Teaching and Learning of ECD Children

Studies on the inclusion of stakeholders in the teaching and learning views that parents aim to complete specific tasks to assist children as they learn. A study by [Hearron and Hilderbrand \(2011\)](#) revealed that there were several ways of involving stakeholders in ECD. For example, on task orientation, parents should have fund raising programmes at the ECD centre, for instance having a tuck-shop, to build the centre, assisting ECD children to complete their homework in activities such as making balls, dolls, or toy cars. Also, parents were there to correct children's behaviours so that when they were at school, they would be well disciplined. For example, children should be taught to speak good language, to respect elders, have good manners and care for others ([Hearron and Hilderbrand, 2011](#)).

Also, parents were there to participate in certain activities at school, thus being process orientation to the extent that they will be directly engaged in all activities taking place at the school. ([Hearron and Hilderbrand, 2011](#)) assert that this helped to develop ECD children educationally, appreciate what would be done at the centre and be in SDC committees as it is a stronghold for the development of the school. In Zimbabwe, for example, the SDC is the one that should know where the need is, how to assist and should set targets, for instance, of school furniture needed such as desks, chairs, chalks, and stationery ([Mpofu and Shumba, 2012](#)).

Another study by [Bruce et al. \(2010\)](#) established that stakeholders were there to develop skills that will benefit themselves as well as the ECD children. For example, being involved in different projects such as agriculture. These projects were done to develop the ECD centre, the community, ECD children as well as parents will be more experienced in their skills. Parents should be engaged in projects such as soap making, to encourage smartness, poultry, piggery to encourage eating health food and staying health, horticulture to encourage best diets and making Vaseline for a health and nourishing skin ([UNICEF, 2010](#)).

A study by [Fleishch \(2008\)](#) revealed that the involvement of parents in the teaching and learning of ECD children in South Africa, assisted in the construction of an ECD centre, roads, staff development, monitoring and evaluation special education programmes, providing sporting and recreational facilities and providing expertise and

professional support. The assistance rendered in South Africa by parents could not be forthcoming in the Zimbabwean context, hence the need to establish that aspect in this study.

According to Bruce *et al.* (2010), stakeholders are not only parents but could also be an organ of government, a non-governmental organisation, or even private entities. Bruce *et al.* (2010) established that these organisations were involved in the ECD programmes so as to assist ECD learners in different ways such as, training ECD personnel, thus offering training programmes so as ECD teachers will be able to teach young children, provide learning materials such as furniture, books, playing materials for both indoor and outdoor, build more blocks and provide equipment such as toilet sets, buckets to wash hands after using the toilet so as to improve and maintain sanitation (Mariga *et al.*, 2014).

In another study, Hearron and Hilderbrand (2011) point out that the non-governmental organisations assisted ECD programmes by offering food to ECD learners. For example, these provided meals such as lunch which contains all food nutrients thus balanced diet. This enabled the child to grow up healthy, attend their lessons and be motivated. With donor fatigue and flight in the Zimbabwean context, the situation could be different (Zvobgo, 1999). Therefore, there is need to establish the extent of donor involvement in Marondera Urban ECD centres.

2.5. The Role of School Policies in the Teaching and Learning of ECD Children

According to Young (2012), a policy is a kind of guide that delimits action and describes a course of action to achieve objectives and goals. A study by Goffin (2000) in the United Kingdom, established that policies were very necessary if a programme or project was to succeed. This was why there was the United Kingdom Policy Act (2000), on the teaching and learning of ECD children. The policy, among other issues, indicated that ECD children should not be discriminated due to disabilities or vulnerabilities. In the same study, it was established that there was need to make sure all children were treated the same, hence the study encouraged mainstreaming of ECD learners and not to treat disabled learners less favourably for a reason related to their impairment. Such children were entitled to all the basic requirements that they needed in their learning and the state was obliged to make up for such provisions.

According to a study by Rwatirera *et al.* (2011), on ECD policy in Namibia on the teaching and learning of ECD children, it was established that the ruling government supported ECD services and dedicated commitment to the welfare of children they represent the future. The study established that the Namibian Government mobilised and allocated resources for ECD programmes with the government and other sectors being involved in early childhood programming and resource mobilisation, allocation, and monitoring. The non-governmental organisations and private institutions should promote the development of appropriate ECD programmes with parents in the home and community Rwatirera *et al.* (2011).

The Secretary's Circular Number 14 of 2004 states that all ECD centres will be required to attach at least class of 3 to 5 years olds for ECD 'A' class, 6 to 7 years for ECD 'B' class, Grade 1 and 2 classes for children aged 7 to 8 years. The circular went on stating that the classes formed will be manned by professionally qualified teachers (Mpofu and Shumba, 2012). Policies formulated are available, but these need to be evaluated hence, this study would look at some these to establish whether they were implemented to the satisfaction of effective teaching and learning at ECD level.

Studies have also established that the ECD provision is also covered in the Act of 1987 where there is a clause on section 4 subsection 1, which states that, every child in Zimbabwe has the right to education. No child should be refused entry in any school on grounds of tribe, creed, religion, place of origin or status of his or her parents (Mpofu and Shumba, 2012). Mpofu and Shumba (2012), emphasise that ECD policy in Zimbabwe, should accord equal opportunities for enrolment, besides race, colour, culture and religion thus promoting non-discrimination, thus promoting multicultural education. In addition, all these policies were adopted by the Zimbabwean Government from legislation including Education for All (EFA) policy, Dakar Framework for Action, The Salamanca Statement for Action, among others. These policies cater for inclusive and multicultural education in the development of ECD children holistically.

Still on policy issues, Moyo *et al.* (2012) in their study in Zimbabwe, while acknowledging the importance of policy, established that government policies on financial support needed to be revisited to enable effective teaching and learning at ECD centres. In the same study, policies that perpetuated poor remuneration of teachers were cited by Moyo *et al.* (2012) as negatively impacting on the teaching and learning of ECD children. According to the study, ECD teachers were paid allowances not salaries. However, the situation seems to have changed as the government is paying salaries but has since indicated that the payment of the salaries shall now rest on the communities. The already struggling communities will find this new policy a further impediment to the implementation of ECD programmes. However, the policy was reversed but it still needs to be established how the enunciation of the policy still impacts on the teaching and learning of ECD children, since policy formulation is incremental in nature and there could be such pronouncements in future. From the above, one has a feeling that there flip flopping in terms of policy may have some impact on the teaching and learning of ECD children, hence the need for further investigation on the issue.

3. Methodology

The research design adopted for the current study was the case study design. A case study is an empirical study which investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context using multiple sources of evidence (Simons, 2009). Baxter and Jack (2008) argue that case studies are undertaken to try and figure out why a certain situation prevails. Accordingly, this study aimed at gathering data on the respondents' perceptions of the factors affecting the teaching and learning of ECD children Marondera Urban. The case study design entailed looking at

three groups of respondents that had unique characteristics and rich in information to be able to answer the research problem at hand. Since case study research methods use numerous data generation strategies, this promoted data credibility or “truth value” (Patton, 2002). The case study assisted in producing accounts that helped describe the situation in the ECD centres and helped in capturing situations and explaining complex real-life issues that may not be captured through experimentation and surveys (Patton, 2014). According to Simons (2009), case studies helped facilitating in-depth an exploration of an issue from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a project, policy, institution, programme, or system in a real life. For that reason, a diversity of perceptions on factors that affected the teaching and learning of ECD children in Marondera urban schools by the school heads, ECD teachers and parents were sought for and obtained.

In this study, three research instruments were used. These are interviews, questionnaires, and document analysis. Questionnaires were administered on ECD teachers because of their large number while the school heads and SDC members were interviewed to get an in-depth understanding of issues being investigated. The researcher felt that some SDC members might have been illiterate to respond to the questionnaires hence they were interviewed (Dina, 2012). The assumption that some SDC members were illiterate, was premised on the fact that selection and election into the SDC was not based on whether one was literate or not but on whether one had a child learning at a school. The researcher used document analysis, in this study, to argument the questionnaires and interviews. For example, inventories kept at the school were perused to ascertain the quantities and state of the equipment and infrastructure at the ECD centres. This data on the documents then was used to determine the truthfulness of the data supplied in the questionnaire and interviews. According to Flick (2011), the use of more than one research instruments enables the researcher to counteract bias during the research and collection of a variety of data.

This study was concerned with stakeholders in Marondera Urban. For that reason, the total population for the study consisted of 14 school heads, 56 members of the School Development Committees representing the parents, 126 ECD teachers, giving a total of 196 prospective respondents. These respondents were targeted on the basis that they were directly involved in the provision of teaching and learning materials, and some were also involved in the instructional processes in the schools, for example the ECD teachers. The researcher selected a total of 74 respondents for the study through simple random sampling. These were made up of 8 school heads, 56 ECD teachers and 10 SDC members out of the total population of 196 prospective respondents. The sample accounted for 38% of the total population and therefore, justified according to Leedy and Omrod (2012) who state that for any study, a sample of 10% of the population is adequate enough to be representative of the population from which it is drawn.

4. Results and Findings

4.1. Teacher Related Factors Affecting the Teaching and Learning of ECD Learners

Data were presented thematically according to the research question that the study aimed at addressing. Question 1 was on teacher related factors affecting the teaching and learning of ECD learners.

Table-1. Responses of Teacher related factors affecting the teaching and learning of ECD learners

QUESTION	RESPONSES			
	True		False	
	No.	%	No.	%
1. Unqualified ECD teachers are recruited thus affecting the teaching and learning of ECD learners at your school.	30	54	26	46
2. Teachers lack professional ethics and conduct such as absenteeism and absconding lessons thus affecting the teaching and learning of ECD learners at your school.	32	57	24	43
3. Some ECD teachers lack commitment towards work thus affecting the teaching and learning of ECD learners at your school.	33	59	23	41
4. School heads provide appropriate supervision and guidance to ECD teachers.	42	75	12	25
5. Are ECD teachers motivated to teach at the school?	50	89	6	11
6. Remuneration for ECD teachers is affecting the teaching and learning of ECD learners. Do you agree?	53	95	3	5
7. Poor working conditions for ECD teachers are affecting the teaching and learning of ECD learners.	54	96	2	4

According to table 1, 30 (54%) ECD teachers indicated that it was true that unqualified ECD teachers were recruited thus affecting the teaching and learning of ECD learners at their schools. Some 26 (46%) said it was false. The table also shows that the majority of 32 (57%) teachers indicated that teachers lacked professional ethics and conduct such as absenteeism and absconding lessons thus affecting the teaching and learning of ECD learners at the school unlike 24 (43%) who thought otherwise. This finding was collaborated by school heads who also indicated that unprofessional behaviour such absconding and late coming to school were affecting the teaching and learning in the ECD section. For example, one school head said:

In the school, I have discovered that a lot of unprofessional behaviour is going on among the teachers. Some do not come to school early, if they come at all. Others just decide to go away leaving their classes unattended.

On the same note, SDC members agreed that ECD teachers were yet to be professional as they no longer had children’s education at heart as they spent much of their time in buying and selling practices not catering for the development of ECD learners. Also, 33 (59%) ECD teachers indicated lack commitment towards work thus affecting the teaching and learning of ECD learners at their ECD centres. Since 42 (75%) indicated that school heads were qualified and experienced in working with ECD teachers and SDC members, they were able to provide appropriate supervision and guidance to ECD teachers, for instance, through guidance on the records to be used during teaching and learning and methods of teaching ECD children and the resources to be used. Most of primary school heads as well as the ministry, were aware on how to motivate ECD teachers so that they catered for an updated teaching and learning pedagogies as they were involved in workshops, being given incentives, and possessing different certificates in areas such as music, health and nutrition, mass displays, to mention just a few as, 50 (89%) responded positively. The findings seem to be in line with the dictates of the scientific management theory which calls for the training of a job incumbent so that he/she fits into job appropriately (Cole, 1995).

The table indicates that 53 (95%) of the respondents agreed that remuneration for ECD teachers was affecting the teaching and learning of ECD learners. For example, due to the economy, the salaries they got did not meet their basic requirements, and by so doing this was affecting the teaching and learning process as the ECD teachers would not spend much time with the ECD learners, rather they would be searching for means to better their lives, for example, being involved in buying and selling of goods inside and outside the school. During the study, the researcher discovered that some would go as far as South Africa leaving their classes unattended, for more than three days. The responses of ECD teachers according to Table 1 show that 54 (96%) agreed that poor working conditions for ECD teachers were affecting the teaching and learning of ECD learners. For instance, the classrooms were too small, hence while the enrolment was always high, leading to high teacher-pupil ratio, inadequate furniture, and poor buildings and this led to high textbook-pupil ratio.

ECD teachers needed to attend more workshops for the development of teaching-related skills such as ICT, improvisation of resources, creating ECD learning corners in classrooms and for holistic development of ECD children. All these areas needed further training/staff development to enhance effectiveness in ECD teaching and learning in primary schools.

Representing others, one of the ECD teachers said:

We need workshops on how to improvise the resources, but how should we be capable of implementing that since our classrooms will have more than 60 learners? How can I improvise enough media, how should I cater for ECD children’s strengths and weaknesses, how can I conduct Individualised Educational Plan (IEP) and the outdoor play area does not cater for holistic development of ECD children, even if we are staff developed?

From the above, it shows that teachers were aware that they needed training while the school was not able to provide for teaching and learning space to accommodate what had been taught to the teachers during staff development. The findings from this study are similar to those by Young (2012) who found out that shortage of qualified ECD teachers was affecting the teaching and learning of ECD children. That was because of ignorance, economic hardships, and shortage of resources. To the contrary, the findings disagree with those by Loughran (2006), who found out that ECD teachers should be professionals in dealing with ECD children. They should have children at heart, but the difference may arise due to the difference of environment, and the period of study. Loughran (2006) was investigating on issues in a developed country where teachers were well remunerated.

The second question was on what resources were needed at ECD centres for effective teaching and learning. This would help in ascertaining their availability or none of it, in the ECD centres. Responses given below help unearth these whether these resources were available.

4.2. Resources Needed at ECD Centres for Effective Teaching and Learning

Table-2. Responses on resources needed at ECD centres for effective teaching and learning

QUESTION	RESPONSES			
	True		False	
	No.	%	No.	%
1. Does your school have enough classrooms for all children attending ECD classes?	40	71	16	29
2. There is adequate furniture at your ECD centre?	8	14	48	86
3. Most of the ECD buildings at your school are modern ones.	10	18	46	82
4. The state of your school buildings, furniture and fixtures used for ECD teaching and learning are adequate.	10	18	46	82
5. Does your school avail of teaching-learning support materials for ECD at your school?	26	46	34	54

Table 2 shows that 40 (71%) agreed that schools had enough classrooms for all children attending ECD classes. However, 16 (29%) disagreed as the ECD centres did not have enough classrooms meaning there was inadequate space in the classrooms for effective teaching and learning. Also, most of the respondents, 48 (86%), argued that one of the greatest challenges at their ECD centres were shortages of furniture. Due to high teacher-pupil ratios and shortages of classrooms, this was worsening the challenges of furniture in the classroom to the extent that three ECD

children shared two chairs, or some would be seated on the floor. Hence, this was negatively affecting the teaching and learning of the ECD children. Though the ministry was trying to assist in infrastructural development and in building modern ECD buildings through initiatives such as School Improvement Grants (SIG), they were yet to meet with standard requirements as 46 (82%) ECD teachers denied that the buildings were not yet modern. This was against the requirements of the bureaucratic theory, which according to Weber and Taylor requires that there be resources that are appropriate for one to accomplish given task effectively (Kapfunde, 2001; Lucy, 2001).

Some of the school heads agreed that they were yet to meet the standards as required by the ministry. Some SDC members stated that there was inadequate indoor and outdoor resources and furniture. Also, they were yet to meet inclusivity requirements, thus allowing those on wheelchairs to freely move around and assist ECD children with disabilities to feel accommodated as there were no ramps on entrances and exit doors. However, some 10 (18%) of the ECD centres were trying to meet the standard to become modern ones. Most, 34 (54%), of the ECD teachers complained that the school were not supporting them on the required materials for ECD children. Some 26 (46%) of the ECD teachers said they had acquired materials through improvisation. When asked what the teacher-pupil ratio was in their ECD centres, one teacher said it was 1:30-39, three teachers indicated 1:40-49, twenty-two stated it was 1:50-59 and thirty indicated that it was 1:60 and above. Also, on what the textbook-pupil ratio was in the ECD centres, it showed that shortage of textbooks was one of the greatest challenges in the ECD centres as four teachers indicated 1:10-19, six teachers had 1:20-29 and forty-six had 1:30 and above. This showed that most of the classes had only one textbook per each subject per class. To the contrary, school heads denied that there was shortage of space in the ECD classrooms, and they further argued that there was quality furniture and a manageable teacher pupil ratio at their ECD centres. This contrasted what ECD teachers had indicated. These differences may be because school heads were trying to hide the information for the reputation of their ECD centres since they were not abiding by the regulations of ECD centres policies. The Education Commission (2016) (The Nziramasanga Commission) indicated that for effective learning there should be adequate space, resources both indoor and outdoor, coloring books, computers desks and chairs. Observations made by the researcher seem to go with the contributions of the ECD teachers. However, since the ministry was not able to provide all the required resources due to economic hardships, parents and ECD teachers were improvising with affordable required resources.

The third aspect that needed to be addressed was on what socio-economic factors affected the teaching and learning of ECD children. Some of these factors are provided in the following section.

4.3. Socio-economic Factors Affecting the Teaching and Learning of ECD Children

Table-3. Responses on socio-economic factors affecting the teaching and learning of ECD children

QUESTION	RESPONSES			
	True		False	
	No.	%	No.	%
1. Parents can provide for their ECD children`s demands because they are well up.	18	32	36	68
2. Parents are mostly poor and incapacitated to meet the demands of the ECD education programmes.	42	75	14	25
3. Families have other priorities other than the education of their ECD children.	40	72	16	28

Table 3 shows some socio-economic factors were affecting the teaching and learning of ECD children. However, it was false according to 36 (68%) ECD teacher that parents were able to meet their ECD children`s demands because they were well up, but it was due to hardworking as they needed the educational developments of their ECD children. These results were corroborated by one parent said during interviews. The parent said:

We are not affording the requirements for our ECD children to attend school because we are not rich but the fact that we value our children`s education, we are trying to provide what is needed so as they develop them educationally.

Also, 42 (75%) teachers argued that parents were not poor and incapacitated to meet the demands of the ECD education programmes hence it was because they were aware that education was power, and they should by any means work hard to meet the educational needs of ECD children. Some 40 (72%) of the respondents agreed that families catered for education of their ECD children as they did not deprive the education of their children. They knew the rights of their children, among them the right to education. In collaboration to that, SDC members commented that as parents they were there to support their children`s education regardless of what difficult it was that which was required by the school in terms of resources. The findings concur with those by Zarina et al. (2012) who established that socio-economic factors affected the teaching and learning of ECD children in the sense that unemployment, diseases such as HIV/AIDS led to poverty and problems that hindered ECD children from attend school regularly. However, in Marondera Urban, parents were working extra hard to support their children`s education.

Another issue that was of the concern to the study was to what extent stakeholders were included in the teaching and learning of ECD children. This section helps to unpack the extent of stakeholder involvement in the teaching and learning in ECD centres.

4.4. The Extent to Which Stakeholders are Included in the Teaching and Learning of ECD Children

Table-4. Responses on the extent to which stakeholders were included in the teaching and learning of ECD children

QUESTION	RESPONSES			
	True		False	
	No.	%	No.	%
1. Is the government or the local authority providing the much-needed assistance to the school to operate?	20	36	36	64
2. Is the community in support of the teaching and learning of ECD children at the school?	34	61	22	39
3. Are the NGOs in support of the teaching and learning of ECD children at the school?	36	64	20	36

From the table, 36 (64%) of the respondents did not agree that the government or the local authority were providing the much-needed assistance to the schools to operate. For example, shortage of buildings, textbooks, furniture, such as desks, chairs, teachers' tables, chalks, and manila were still manifesting. The community was in support of the teaching and learning of ECD children at the school, according to 34 (62%) respondents who agreed that the community was supporting the development of ECD children and ECD centres as they assisted with projects that generated funds such as horticulture, rearing of animals by having projects such as piggery, poultry, rabbit keeping and soap making. This showed that the community cared for the development of their ECD children. Commenting on the adequacy on financial resources at the school one of the SDC member said:

We, as parents, discovered that we must work an extra mile ahead so that our children would pursue with their education. Therefore, it is our duty to have many projects at school so that we support with immediate resources needed such as textbooks, hence, we are working hand in glove with our school heads, supporting each other. Though we are struggling to raise funding so that we buy furniture, we hope to make it.

Some 36 (64%) respondents applauded Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in supporting of the teaching and learning of ECD children at ECD centres. NGOs were providing nutritious food, clothing, and assisting in infrastructural development, thus, building modern schools that allowed every child to access education regardless of disability. These were building classrooms with ramps and wide doors, child sized toilets with child sized seats, boreholes with clean, safe and purified water, providing swings and slides for outdoor play area, texts books as well as providing incentives for ECD teachers. Most of the parents tried hard to furnish their ECD children with materials needed in their learning and some provided for their children with ease, by providing for instance, school fees, enough school uniforms, some resources such as playing materials such as dolls, laptops, and toys (Bruce *et al.*, 2010; Fleishch, 2008). These were some of the ways through which parents were assisting in the teaching and learning of ECD children at ECD centres.

However, some struggled to equip their children due to hardships because of the economy, though they tried. In collaboration with that, SDC members commented positively on how NGOs were assisting and supporting the teaching and learning processes. Also, NGOs were supporting parents who could not afford to provide the needs of children as they were giving out basics for families to survive. The findings from this study were similar and in agreement to the findings by Hearn and Hilderbrand (2011) who discovered that involving stakeholders in the learning of ECD children assisted in the raising of funds, developing infrastructure, and correcting children's behaviour as these were duties done by parents for effective learning of ECD children.

The last concern for the study was to establish what school policies were in place to facilitate the teaching and learning of ECD learners. Views from the different respondents are provided in this section.

4.5. School Policies in Place to Facilitate the Teaching and Learning of ECD Learners

Fee payment policy was not consistent as the parents did not have fixed time or due dates to pay school fees. For example, some parents paid fees at the end of the term or after two terms. By so doing, this delayed the development of the school as there were no specific policies on how to make payments. Also, the other school policy that affected the teaching and learning of ECD learners was teaching time (Jeffries, 2003). ECD learners were supposed to be at the centre up to 12 mid-day but this did not accord ample time for teaching and learning activities. Besides that, enrolling any age group in the same class, also appeared to cause problems as some ECD children would not be paying attention and this affected the teaching and learning process. One of the school heads argued that as schools, they should give ECD children enough time to play since it was their way of learning. The half day learning time not enough for them to play and develop. This concurred with a parent's views who said:

We are not paying school fees for our children to spent only 5 hours at school as this does not allow development of our children. There should be specific policies that children should spent the whole day at school.

The findings from this study were similar to those by Goffin (2000), who argued that appropriate policies were necessary in the teaching and learning ECD children as these policies guided procedures in teaching and learning so as to include issues such as inclusivity, non-discrimination, multiculturalism and mainstreaming. This also sounds similar to our Zimbabwean policies, for example, the Secretary's Circular number 14 of 2004, which stipulates that every child has the right to education regardless of race, colour and culture. However, the researcher discovered that

though ECD centres were trying to meet these policies there were differences and these differences may have arisen due to shortage of funding, level of development of our country, unspecific policies and shortage of resources and qualified personnel.

5. Conclusion

This study was undertaken to establish the stakeholders' perceptions of the factors affecting the teaching and learning of early childhood development learners in Marondera Urban. From the research findings presented and discussed in the previous section of the paper, the study found out that lack of professional ethics by some ECD teachers was negatively affecting the teaching and learning of ECD children. The issue of remuneration for ECD teachers also had a negative impact in the teaching and learning of ECD learners. Added to these, inadequate space in the classrooms for effective teaching and learning, shortage of resources such as textbooks, furniture and workbooks were affecting the ECD teaching and learning process. The high teacher-pupil ratio in the ECD centres caused ECD teachers to ignore slow learners and those with disabilities as they would be moving with those who are highfliers, and this was a result of some school authorities who enrolled higher numbers than was expected. According to the stakeholders, socio-economic factors were affecting the teaching and learning of ECD children as parents needed to work extra hard to provide for their ECD children's demands. Other stakeholders were of the view that inconsistencies in payment of school fees and inadequate teaching and learning time were some of the drawbacks on the instructional processes of ECD learners. However, the intervention of stakeholders such as parents and NGOs, was of great importance in the teaching and learning of ECD children as they assist in fundraising for the development of the school.

6. Recommendations

The following recommendations were drawn from the above conclusions:

1. There should be more training to ECD teachers so that they become professional personal in the teaching and learning of ECD children to avoid developmental delays.
2. The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education should introspect the wages of teachers to motivate them and keep them at their workplaces so that they shun the buying and selling activities during teaching and learning period.
3. There should be workshops that have to be held at ECD centres especially on the development of ECD children mostly to the para-professional to gain experience.
4. School heads should continue assessing, monitoring, and supervising their ECD teachers to maintain guidance and for the better development of ECD children.
5. All stakeholders, including the school heads, ECD teachers, parents, NGOs and MOPSE should work together to develop the ECD centres.
6. School policies should be reviewed so as not to disadvantage those who pay fees in time and for the rapid development the school.

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