

PRESCHOOLS STAKEHOLDERS' PERCEPTIONS OF PEDAGOGY OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF IT'S PROGRAMME IN NAIROBI AND NYERI COUNTIES, KENYA.

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Abstract

Pedagogy in physical education (PE) aims at producing physically literate children. Children who are competent, confident and endowed with knowledge, skills and attitudes for lifelong physical activity. Thus, the need for efficient and effective implementation of a PE programme in early childhood education (ECE). However, concerns have been raised over the implementation of PE in the Kenyan education system. The aim of this study was to examine preschools stakeholders' perceptions of pedagogy of PE and establish whether these perceptions had an impact on the implementation of PE. A descriptive survey was used to collect data from 60 headteachers, 99 teachers and 60 parents. Qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection and analysis were used. This involved use of questionnaires, interview schedules, observation guide and document analysis guide. Descriptive analysis techniques (frequencies, percentages) and content data analysis were used. The study found that, 96 (96.97%) teachers, 59 (98.33%) headteachers and 48 (80%) parents indicated that children needed to be taught PE like other activity areas for them to acquire physical skills. However, 15(25%) headteachers said that PE was not taught in their preschools due to competition in academic performance. Ten (16.67%) parents also said that PE should be given less time. Nairobi and Nyeri pre-schools teachers 93 (93.94%) indicated that PE was taught in their pre-schools but observations revealed that, the actual practice on the ground was different. PE lessons were used to teach other activity areas. Based on the findings of the study it is recommended that, PE should be taught like all other activity areas and the Ministry of Education inspectorate unit should ensure that this is adhered to in all pre-schools. All stakeholders should be sensitised on the importance of PE and seminars and workshops should be held regularly for pre-school teachers.

Key words: Stakeholders, Perception, Pedagogy, Implementation, Physical Education

Introduction

Pedagogy in physical education plays an important role in helping learners' development of motor skills needed to be physically literate individuals. Silverman and Mercier (2015) posit that, teachers made instructional design decisions that led to enhanced motor skill learning. How teachers select, organize, and conduct physical education lessons plays a vital role in learners' abilities to develop the skills needed to achieve physical literacy.

According to SHAPE America (2015), good teaching results in learning as how instructional decisions are implemented and adjusted during lessons plays a vital role in learning. For motor skill learning to occur, teachers must develop lessons that are aimed towards learning. The lessons should provide adequate time for learning and practice. Silverman and Mercier (2015) postulate that, without learning, the act of teaching will not achieve its purpose and learners will not develop the skills they need to become physically literate. For learning outcomes to be achieved, teachers need to instruct and offer demonstrations to guide the learners.

Silverman, Tyson and Morford (1988) point out that, instructional time spent with the subject matter is strongly correlated with learners' motor skill achievement in physical education. When learners adequately and appropriately practice new skills, they are able to master the skills as practice is the most important variable in motor skill learning. During practice, teachers need to supervise and guide learners to enhance skill acquisition.

Despite the vital role that pedagogy of PE plays in acquisition of motor skills, the provision of instructions in PE in schools has declined in many countries (Hardman, 2008). In the United Kingdom, physical education is being delivered ineffectively in primary schools (Griggs, 2012). An

international survey conducted in some African countries also revealed that the status of PE was low and the subject was in danger of being side-lined. According to Ajisafe (1997), the implementation of PE in African schools has a lot of setback. The challenges in the provision of PE included pressure for good academic performance, inadequate time allocation, inadequate and poor state of learning facilities and equipment, lack of adequately trained teachers and poor attitudes from teachers, learners and parents towards PE (Hardman 2008; DiFiore, 2010). These challenges are experienced in countries such as Ghana (Ammah & Kwaw, 2005) and Nigeria (Salokun, 2005).

In Kenya, PE is marginalized because it is not an examinable subject and because of a lack of standards and a strong policy of implementation from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST). PE class time is used as a time to take a break from serious class work (Wanyama, 2011). These setbacks in the implementation of PE programmes result in a decline in children's skill levels and physical fitness.

Research reveals that one of the setbacks in the implementation of PE programmes is the perception of teachers, headteachers and parents on the pedagogy of the subject. Perception is a process by which individuals receive, organize and interpret their sensory impressions in order to give meaning to their environment (Robbins & Judge, 2013). Perception influences how people behave as it leads to a positive or negative attitude which helps define how people behave towards a situation or an object. If teachers, headteachers and parents have a negative perception towards pedagogy of PE, this is likely to have an impact on the implementation of PE programmes in schools as perception influences decision making.

A Worldwide Survey of the situation of PE in schools (Hardman, 2008) revealed the following: PE teachers from Kuwait reported that families did not understand the importance of teaching PE, the school administration did not support the teaching of the PE subject, parents did not give enough attention to PE lessons, the school board had no interest in PE lessons because the grade did not count in the final examination and therefore parents did not encourage their children to take part in all PE lessons. Results from USA revealed that PE was perceived to have lower value as parents favoured academic subjects and time spent on PE was perceived as a threat to academic achievement or examination performance. PE teachers from France and Germany reported that parents never protested when PE lessons were cancelled unlike when other subjects like English or Maths were cancelled as PE was not considered as fundamental. The teachers added that parents occasionally demanded that PE lessons be converted to Maths lessons. Teachers from Norway, Greece and Malta reported that headteachers and parents did not care about PE lessons and considered them as break-time or recreation time and not lessons that had any pedagogical value. They further said that head teachers gave lip service but no actual support for PE lessons and parents saw PE lessons as a waste of time.

Kang and You (2005) further posit that the status of PE in South Korea was perceived to be lower than that of other subjects as teachers, administrators, parents and students thought PE was only needed to reduce the stress of students who were studying hard for other subjects. Headteachers and school staff in Israel did not perceive PE as a valuable academic subject and PE classes were the first to be sacrificed when there was a special project, performance, trip or other school events (Harari, 2005).

To achieve PE objectives in the endeavour to realize national goals of education, PE programmes need to be effectively implemented. Some educators believe that young children will automatically develop their movement skills when they are ready. Galluhe and Ozmun (1996) stress that, environmental conditions such as opportunities for practice, encouragement and instruction are essential for skill learning. Pica (2008) and CARICOM (2011) further add that, motor skills are not acquired and refined without instruction and practice. This therefore means that, setbacks encountered in the implementation process need to be identified and addressed.

It is important to consider the perception of stakeholders towards pedagogy of PE as this may hinder effective implementation of its programmes and the achievement of the objectives of the programme. Njoroge (2000) reveals that weekly PE lessons in primary and secondary schools were not utilized towards achieving the intended goals. This study therefore was set to establish the influence of preschool stakeholders' perception of pedagogy of PE on the implementation of its programme.

Objectives

The objectives of the study were to:

- i) assess whether the preschools teachers' perception of pedagogy of Physical Education influenced its implementation in Nairobi and Nyeri counties.
- ii) establish whether the preschools headteachers' perception of pedagogy of Physical Education influenced its implementation in Nairobi and Nyeri counties.
- iii) examine whether the preschools parents' perception of pedagogy of Physical Education influenced its implementation in Nairobi and Nyeri counties.

Methodology

The descriptive survey design was employed. Using stratified and simple random sampling, 99 preschools were selected from Nairobi and Nyeri Counties. The counties presented varied geographical settings. The respondents included 60 head teachers, 99 teachers and 60 parents who were selected using stratified and simple random sampling. Research instruments used were questionnaires, interviews, observation guides and documentary analysis. Questionnaires were for preschools teachers; interview schedules were for headteachers and parents. Observation guides were used to observe PE lessons and documentary analysis guides were used to examine teaching professional documents. The data collected was analysed using content analysis and descriptive statistics.

Results

Teachers' perception of pedagogy of PE and its implementation

Table 1: Teachers' Responses on Whether PE Needed to be Taught like Other Activity Areas

Response	NAIROBI SCHOOLS					NYERI SCHOOLS				Total
	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
	PB	PR	CC	WF	Total	PB	PR	CC	Total	
PE needs to be taught	16	26	3	6	51	17	25	3	45	96
	16.16	26.26	3.03	6.06	51.51	17.17	25.25	3.03	45.45	96.97
PE does not need to be taught	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	3	3
	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3.03	0.00	3.03	3.03
Total	16	26	3	6	51	17	28	3	48	99
	16.16	26.26	3.03	6.06	51.51	17.17	28.28	3.03	48.48	100

Note: PB (Public), PR (Private), CC (Council), WF (Welfare)

From Table 1, it can be observed that 96 (96.97%) teachers from Nairobi and Nyeri pre-schools indicated that children needed to be taught PE like other activity areas for them to acquire physical skills. However, 3 (3.03%) teachers from Nyeri private pre-schools indicated that children did not need to be taught PE like other activity areas. The response of the 3 (3.03%) teachers from Nyeri private pre-schools implies that some of the teachers from private pre-schools and from Nyeri County did not see the need for teaching PE in pre-schools.

The 96 (96.97%) teachers who indicated that PE should be taught pointed out that, teachers needed to teach PE in order to demonstrate skills, guide, supervise and assist children. PE instructions would enable children acquire the skills correctly. The teachers could also help the children discover and develop their talents. The children also needed to be guided on the importance of PE for them to develop interest in PE activities. The 3 (3.03%) teachers who indicated that PE should not be taught like other activity areas stated that children can acquire the skills on their own.

Some of the teachers who indicated that PE should be taught had the following comments:

“There are certain things that are supposed to be directed. For example, if you tell children to walk like a frog, there are some who do not know how a frog walks and therefore a demonstration is necessary. A PE teacher needs to use the right approach for lesson objectives to be achieved.” [T 1; T 88]

“PE lessons that are planned, taught and supervised by the teachers are more enjoyable for young children. Children need proper instructions and guidance to acquire certain skills.” [T 45; T 53; T 77; T 85]

To establish implementation of PE in the preschools, teachers were asked whether PE was taught in their preschools. The responses are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Teachers' Responses on Teaching of PE in Pre-schools.

Response	NAIROBI SCHOOLS					NYERI SCHOOLS					Total
	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
	PB	PR	CC	WF	Total	PB	PR	CC	Total		
PE taught in the school	16	25	3	5	49	16	25	3	44	93	
	16.16	25.25	3.03	5.05	49.49	16.16	25.25	3.03	44.44	93.94	
PE not taught in the school	0	1	0	1	2	1	3	0	4	6	
	0.00	1.01	0.00	1.01	2.02	1.01	3.03	0.00	4.04	6.06	
Total	16	26	3	6	51	17	28	3	48	99	
	16.16	26.26	3.03	6.06	51.51	17.17	28.28	3.03	48.48	100	

Note: PB (Public), PR (Private), CC (Council), WF (Welfare)

Table 2, reveals that 93 (93.94%) teachers indicated that PE was taught in their pre-schools while 6 (6.06%) indicated that PE was not taught in their pre-schools. Those who indicated PE was not taught in their school were 3 (3.03%) teachers from Nyeri private pre-schools, 1 (1.01%) from a Nairobi private pre-school, 1(1.01%) from a Nairobi welfare pre-school and 1(1.01%) from a Nyeri public pre-school. Out of the 6 (6.06%) teachers who indicated that they did not teach PE in their pre-schools, 4 (4.04%) were from Nyeri pre-schools, and 2 (2.02%) from Nairobi pre-schools. This implies that a higher percentage of pre-schools which did not teach PE were from Nyeri county and from private pre-schools. This may be due to the different preschools' managerial structures in Kenya which is reflected in the implementation of school policies.

Although 93 (93.93%) teachers reported that PE was taught in their pre-schools, the observation schedules portrayed different results as some 18 (18.18%) of the public pre-schools which claimed to teach PE did not while some 6 (6.06%) of the private pre-schools were very keen on the teaching of PE. PE should be taught daily but the actual practice on the ground is where children are allowed to go to the playground and the teacher stands at the corner of the field denying children the instructional aspect of Physical Education.

The teachers were further asked to indicate the time allocated to PE lessons in their preschools. The responses are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Time Allocation for PE lessons in the Pre-schools

Response	Nairobi Schools				Nyeri Schools.			F %
	PB	PR	CC	WF	PB	PR	CC	
5 days x 30mins	12	11	2	2	9	10	0	46 (46.46)
3 days x 30 mins	1	1	0	0	3	4	1	10(10.10)
2 days x 30mins	0	3	0	0	0	4	1	8 (8.08)
No PE lesson	0	1	0	1	1	3	0	6 (6.06)
1 day x 30mins	0	2	0	1	1	0	0	4 (4.04)
5 days x 20mins	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	2 (2.02)
1 day x 35mins	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	2 (2.02)
3 days x 40mins	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1 (1.01)
2 days x 45mins	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1 (1.01)
5 days x 40mins	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1 (1.01)
2 days x 35mins	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1 (1.01)
2 x 30mins breaks	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1 (1.01)
5 days x 45mins	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1 (1.01)
2 days x 40mins	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1 (1.01)
3 days x 45mins	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1 (1.01)
1 day x 4hrs	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1 (1.01)
5 days x 15mins	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1 (1.01)
2 days x 50mins	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1(1.01)
1 day x 1hr30mins	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1 (1.01)
3 days x 1hr	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1 (1.01)
Total	16	26	3	6	17	28	3	99
	16.16	26.26	3.03	6.06	17.17	28.28	3.03	100

According to the results in Table 3, there were varied time allocations for PE in the pre-schools both in Nairobi and in Nyeri; 46 (46.46%) of the teachers indicated that PE was taught daily for 30 minutes, followed by 10 (10.10%) 3 times a week for 30 minutes, 8 (8.08%) daily for 35 minutes, 8(8.08%) twice a week for 30minutes, 4 (4.04%) once a week for 30 minutes, 2(2.02%) daily for 20 minutes, 2 (2.02%) once a week for 35 minutes, 1 (1.01%) 3 times a week for one hour, 1 (1.01%) one day a week for one and half hours, 1 (1.01%) twice a week for fifty minutes and 1 (1.01%) one day for four hours. The Early Childhood Development and Education Handbook (KIE, 2008) recommends an allocation of 30 minutes daily for PE. The varied time allocation as displayed in Table 3 is contributed by the various type of sponsorship in pre-school education in Kenya. The different time allocation is an indicator that some pre-schools do not distinguish between PE and games. They deny children the opportunity and adequate time for PE instructions in a PE lesson but offer a block time of one afternoon such as friday afternoon for games for the whole pre-school.

The results of the study on time allocation for PE in pre-schools revealed that 46 (46.46%) of the pre-school teachers conformed to the KIE (2008) guidelines of 30 minutes of PE each day of the

week while 53 (53.53%) did not conform. Other studies reveal the problem of time allocation for PE lessons at other levels of education in Kenya (Muniu, 1986; Kiganjo, 1987; Muindi, 1998). According to McWilliams et al, (2009), the amount of time allocated for physical activity, instructions, and the appropriate physical settings for play influence physical activity levels.

To further assess the implementation of PE in pre-school, the study sought to establish whether the PE lesson was indicated in the timetable. The findings from the teachers' responses are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Indication of the PE lessons on the Timetable

Response	NAIROBI SCHOOLS					NYERI SCHOOLS				Total
	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
	PB	PR	CC	WF	Total	PB	PR	CC	Total	
PE lesson indicated on timetable	16 16.16	25 25.25	3 3.03	5 5.05	49 49.49	17 17.17	25 25.25	3 3.03	45 45.45	94 94.94
PE lesson not indicated on timetable	0 0.00	1 1.01	0 0.00	1 1.01	2 2.02	0 0.00	3 3.03	0 0.00	3 3.03	5 5.05
Total	16 16.16	26 26.26	3 3.03	6 6.06	51 51.51	17 17.17	28 28.28	3 3.03	48 48.48	99 100

Note: PB (Public), PR (Private), CC (Council), WF (Welfare)

From Table 4, 94 (94.95%) teachers indicated that PE was included in the pre-school timetable while 5 (5.05%) of the teachers, indicated that PE was not indicated in the timetable. From those who indicated that PE was not timetabled; 3 (3.03%) teachers were from Nyeri private pre-schools, 1 (1.01%) from a Nairobi private pre-school and 1 (1.01%) from a Nairobi welfare pre-school. The results show that, out of the 5 (5.05%) of the teachers who indicated that PE was not included in their pre-schools timetable, 4 (4.04%) were from private pre-schools from Nairobi and Nyeri counties. This implies that some private pre-schools from Nairobi and Nyeri counties did not include PE in the school time table and thus PE was not taught in these schools. This may be attributed to the different sponsorship of preschools in Kenya which have different school policies.

One teacher from Nyeri pre-schools commenting on the timetable stated:

“PE is indicated in the time-table daily but it is taught only for three days in a week.” [T 13]

This teacher's comment shows that, PE is indicated on the timetable as a formality. This implies that the PE lessons are used for other activity areas thus denying the children play time opportunities for learning and acquiring motor skills. These results at the pre-school level are similar with Muindi (1998) and Nyonje (2004) who also established that PE lessons were indicated

on the primary schools' timetables though not all primary schools taught PE as indicated in the time-table while others used the PE lesson to teach other subjects such as Mathematics and English.

To further examine the implementation of the PE curriculum, the study sought to find out if the PE lesson was used to teach other activity areas instead of PE. The teachers' responses are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Use of PE lessons to Teach Other Activity Areas

Response	NYERI SCHOOLS									
	F	F	F	F	Total	F	F	F	Total	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
	PB	PR	CC	WF		PB	PR	CC		
PE lesson used to teach other areas	5	11	2	5	23	13	16	3	32	55
	5.05	11.11	2.02	5.05	23.23	13.13	16.16	3.03	32.32	55.56
					(45.09%)				(66.67%)	
Lessons used not to teach other areas	11	15	1	1	28	4	12	0	16	44
	11.11	15.15	1.01	1.01	28.28	4.04	12.12	0.00	16.16	44.44
Total	16	26	3	6	51	17	28	3	48	99
	16.16	26.26	3.03	6.06	51.51	17.17	28.28	3.03	48.48	100

Note: PB (Public), PR (Private), CC (Council), WF (Welfare)

From Table 5, it is observed that 55 (55.56%) teachers from Nairobi and Nyeri pre-schools reported that PE lessons were used to teach other activity areas while 44 (44.44%) reported that the PE lessons were not used to teach other activity areas. Nyeri pre-schools had a higher percentage of teachers 32 (66.67%) who reported that PE lessons were used to teach other activity areas than Nairobi pre-schools 23(45.09%). This implies that Nyeri preschools did not efficiently implement the PE programme.

The responses from the varied categories of pre-schools indicated that though the PE lessons were indicated in the timetable, other activities were conducted during the lessons. The PE lessons were used by teachers to cover work in other activity areas or to cover the syllabus. The main activity areas indicated were number work and language. Preparation of children for examinations and standard one interviews was done during the PE lessons. The time was also used to allow children to complete their class work. One of the teachers from Nairobi pre-schools commenting on the use of PE lessons to teach other activity areas summarized this situation by stating that:

“The teacher is always under pressure to teach other activity areas and so does not follow the PE timetable.” [T 14]

Another teacher commented:

“No one asks for mean scores in PE. Our teaching is all about mean scores and academic performance of the children. Sustaining a job is based on the academic performance of the children.” [T 83]

These teachers’ comments allude to a situation where PE was not taught in some pre-schools due to pressure for children to perform well academically.

The observation schedules also revealed that teachers used the PE lessons to teach other activity areas as the researcher would visit a pre-school to observe a PE lesson during the PE scheduled time, only to find the children still in class learning other activity areas. The results on the use of PE lessons in pre-schools to teach other activity areas are similar with those of Muindi (1998) and Nyonje (2004) who also observed that at the primary level of education in Kenya, PE was indicated in the timetable but other subjects especially English and Number work were taught during the PE lessons.

Headteachers’ perception of pedagogy of PE and its implementation

Results from the interview schedule revealed that, 59 (98.33%) headteachers indicated that there was need for PE to be taught just like the other activity areas while 1 (1.67 %) indicated that there was no need. The headteachers pointed out that there was need to teach PE for proper acquisition of skills, for skills demonstration, for assistance and guidance to the children and for the teacher to discover and nurture children’s talents. However, 15 (25%) of the headteachers said that although it was important to teach PE, it was not taught in their pre-schools. They pointed out that children played during break time. One of the headteachers said that, children can acquire the skills on their own. Some of the headteachers made the following comments on the need for PE to be taught:

“Children play during their free time. I thought the morning, lunch and evening breaks were enough play time for children.”
[H 3]

“Children in pre-school need to be taught physical skills. Learning of skills can only be taught like the other activity areas.” [H 14]

These headteachers’ comments indicate that some of the headteachers advocated for the teaching of PE to enable children to acquire physical skills. However, some headteachers thought that break time was enough for children’s play while some headteachers highlighted the challenges encountered in the teaching of PE such as pressure for more time for academic work.

The study sought to find out from the headteachers whether there was a government policy on the teaching of PE in pre-schools. Out of the 60 headteachers interviewed, 47 (78.33%) reported that there was a government policy on the teaching of PE while 13 (21.67%) reported that they were not aware of the policy. Indeed, one of the headteachers said that he had never heard of the policy while another headteacher who heads both the public primary and pre-school sections said that he did not

know what happens in the pre-school. The headteachers further indicated that, although they were aware of the PE teaching policy, some did not follow it.

The headteachers pointed out, there were challenges in the teaching of PE in pre-schools. Some of the pre-schools which did not teach PE had no facilities such as playgrounds while others had the facilities but did not teach PE so that they could teach children how to read and write or prepare the children for standard one examination. There was a lot of competition among pre-schools and pressure from parents for academic performance. This led to the side lining of PE teaching. Some headteachers also assumed that PE is what children played during break and lunch time while others assumed children would acquire motor skills on their own.

One headteacher made the following comment:

“PE should be taught but it is not taught due to competition with other schools in academic performance. The school management checks the standards constantly and the work covered. Therefore, we do not teach children PE but allow them to play during break time and have games on Thursdays because if the children fail in the examinations, the teachers and the head teacher are blamed.”
[H 22]

Despite the awareness of the significance of PE, PE is taught in some pre-schools and not in others. The results show a lack of a clear ECE policy which leads to different modes of implementation of the pre-school PE programmes. The lack of a clear ECE policy is supported by Wawire (2006) and Gatumu (2010). The partnership policy in the provision of ECE services and the lack of policy enforcement by the government lead to a situation where administrators make differing decisions on the implementation of the PE programme. This influences curriculum implementation in pre-schools (Ng’asike, 2004; Wawire, 2006).

Parents’ perception of pedagogy of PE and its implementation

From the parents’ interview schedule, 48 (80%) of the parents indicated that there was need to teach PE in pre-school for children to be properly guided by the teacher, to learn through play, to refresh their minds, to discover their talents, to be physically active and to develop mentally and socially. However, 10 (16.67%) parents insisted that even if PE was taught in the pre-schools, it should be allocated less time to give more time to the academic subjects. Some of the parents had the following to say on whether there was need to teach PE:

“PE should not be given more than 30 minutes, if it is given less than 30 minutes, the better”. [P 6]

“Schools should have less play time and more time to learn English. Children have all the time to play at home. At school, they should learn more and play less.” [P 38]

Other parents had this to say:

“Children love movement and PE should be taught as it makes them happy, gives them vital exercises and makes them mentally alert.” [P36]

“What happened to play? There was plenty of time for play and games in our childhood but today, children no longer play. Children should be given the opportunity to learn and enjoy performing physical skills and games.” [P 50]

These parents’ comments indicate that some parents viewed PE as a waste of learning time and it should be allocated less time in pre-school. However, some parents lamented about the lack of opportunities for child play at school as schools denied children time to engage in play activities or games. The parents pointed out that children need play opportunities to learn, relax and enjoy.

Among the parents interviewed, 28 (47%) of the parents from Nairobi county were aware that PE was taught in pre-schools while only 18 (30%) of the parents from Nyeri county were aware. This may be due to the varied avenues of exposure on the role of PE and sports and healthy living that the parents with higher levels of education both from Nairobi and Nyeri counties have access to.

The parents who were not aware of the teaching of PE in pre-schools said that they did not know all the activity areas taught in pre-schools. Some of the parents 12 (20%) said that the decision to teach PE in the preschools was the duty of the administrators and the teachers as they knew what was best for the children. One of the parents from Nyeri pre-schools commenting on the teaching of PE said:

“I am not sure whether they learn PE or not but I know that Friday is a games day for the school because the children are required to wear their PE attire on that day.” [P 1]

The parents’ comments show that some parents did not fully get involved in their children learning but left the whole task to the school. This may imply that some parents do not contribute positively towards their children’s learning in pre-school. These parents’ comments indicate that some parents viewed PE as a waste of learning time and it should be allocated less time in pre-school. However, some parents lamented about the lack of opportunities for child play at school as schools denied children time to engage in play activities or games. The parents pointed out that children need play opportunities to learn, relax and enjoy.

The study observed that parents from Nairobi and Nyeri pre-schools with higher levels of education had an understanding of the role of PE in the lives of children. However, Wawire (2006) noted that parents from Nairobi were better informed about the aspects of pre-school than parents from Machakos. Abagi (2008) on the other hand, observed that parents who took their children to high cost pre-school were aware about the benefit of ECE.

Conclusions

PE needs to be taught like other activity areas in the ECE curriculum as it enhances the holistic growth of the child. However, despite the positive perception of the pedagogy of PE, lack of full support from all the stakeholders affects the implementation of the programme. Lack of maximum support leads to non-teaching of PE lessons, inadequate time allocation and use of PE lessons to teach other activity areas.

Recommendations

There is need for educational talks, seminars and workshops to create awareness and to sensitise all the implementers and stakeholders of pre-schools on the relevance of PE programmes, the need for pedagogy of PE and the need to support PE programmes.

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