THE QUALITY OF EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES IN HARARE PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN ZIMBABWE

by

TENDAI CHIKUTUMA

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DECLARATION

Student Number: 3340914-5

I hereby declare that the thesis entitled: THE QUALITY OF EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES IN HARARE PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN ZIMBABWE at the University of South Africa is my own work. All the sources I have used or quoted in the study have been indicated and acknowledged by way of complete references.

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DEDICATION

The thesis is dedicated to my parents, Francis Wurayayi Chikutuma and Margina Blandina Chinyama-Chikutuma.

ABSTRACT

The study sought to establish the quality of Early Childhood Development (ECD) programmes. It was therefore important that the researcher investigates whether the ECD programmes were meeting the expectations of the quality indicators and consequently the holistic needs of ECD children. The qualitative design methodology was used in this study. Self-constructed observation checklists and in-depth interview guides were used. The participants in the study were 10 school heads, 10 ECD teachers and 10 ECD parents, one from each of the ten schools under study from Harare low and high density suburbs. The data were content analysed. The findings of the study revealed that school heads incompetently managed the ECD curriculum. It was also revealed in the study that ECD policies existed in schools but some were not adhered to which impacted negatively on the quality of ECD programmes. Findings of the study also revealed that the components of a quality ECD programme which included; nutrition, health and safety, parental involvement, stakeholder involvement, guidance and counselling in ECD were compromised. The study showed that ECD personnel qualifications were varied. The study also revealed that teaching methods in ECD were all child-centred though some ECD parents and school heads criticised the play-way and child-centred method of teaching. Findings revealed that material, financial and human resources were scarce. It was concluded that the quality of ECD programmes in Harare primary schools was compromised. It was recommended that training of all stakeholders on ECD management and organisation would bring about a better understanding of ECD programmes, mounting staff development workshops on practical skills training in guidance and counselling of ECD children for ECD teachers, school heads and counsellors and, inviting parents as resource persons when teaching certain concepts would improve the quality of ECD programmes. Recommendations for further study were made.

Key Terms: Early Childhood Development, Preschool, Nursery School, Crèche, Early Childhood Education and Care, Primary School, Guidance, Counselling, Nutrition, Health, Safety, Parents, Teachers, School Heads, Parents, School Development Committee, Stakeholders, Zimbabwe.

ACRONYMS

BECD	Bachelor of Education in Early Childhood Development
BED	Bachelor of Education
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ECEC	Early Childhood Education and Care
EFA	Education For All
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MED	Master of Education
MCDWA	Ministry of Community Development and Women Affairs
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NHS	Nutrition, health and safety
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SDC	School Development Committee
TIC	Teacher In Charge
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Education Fund

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CHAPTER 1: THE PROBLEM AND ITS CONTEXT

1.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores the problem and its context. Issues covered include: background to the study, analysis of the problem which includes the awareness of the problem, investigation of the problem, the statement of the problem and its sub-research questions. Furthermore, aims and objectives of the research are discussed and among the issues articulated in detail are: significance of the study, assumptions of the study, the theoretical framework, delimitations of the study, limitations of the study and definition of terms.

1.2   BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Early Childhood Development has emerged as a theme in international dialogue in education in recent years (The World Bank, 2010:1; Thomas & Thomas, 2009:5 Martinez, Naudeu & Pereira, 2012:609). The 1989 United Nations adoption on the rights of children began a more visible drive for Early Childhood Development (ECD) on the international stage (Soud, 2009:14; Hyde & Kabiru, 2003:14). Closely following this, the Education For All (EFA) initiative from the 1990 world conference on EFA in Jomtien Thailand, the 2000 World Education Forum, Dakar, Senegal and the development of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in the United Nations have all led to an increase in government policies in the domain of ECD (Myers, 2004:3; UNESCO, 2005:20; Soud, 2009:23). ECD is defined as the period from pregnancy and birth to the age of eight years (The World Bank, 2010: 1; Christie, 2008:165; Thomas & Thomas, 2009:10). This is generally divided into pregnancy and peri-natal care which entails pre-natal care, attended births registration and post-natal care (The World Bank, 2010:1). It is made up of the 0 to 3 years stage which involves parent education, early stimulation, nutrition interventions, home based care and crèches (The World Bank, 2010:1; Thomas & Thomas 2009:4). The World Bank (2010: 2) further states that ECD comprises of 3 to 6 year olds and, at this stage, there is parent and preschool education. Finally ECD also includes 6 to 8 year olds and is marked by transition to formal education and improved early

primary school (Thomas & Thomas, 2009:7; The World Bank, 2010:2). The ECD concept thus encompasses everything from a child's nutrition, health and hygiene to cognitive skills, social and emotional development (Christie, 2008:190; The World Bank, 2010:2). The early years of the child are critical for the child's stimulation, education and there is emphasis on healthy practices which are culturally appropriate and community based (Excell & Linington, 2011:10; Soud, 2009:15).

The concept of quality is dynamic and rights based. Education and human rights are essential components of the right to quality education of which teacher quality is a key element (Myers, 2004:14; Hyde & Kabiru, 2003). These rights for the ECD children are highlighted by The State of the World's Children (2001:1) as the provision of opportunities to develop fine motor skills. The State of the World's Children (2001:1) also suggests that four to five year-olds should be exposed to activities that encourage language development such as talking, being read to and singing. Furthermore, opportunities to learn cooperation, helping and sharing as well as experimentation with pre-reading and pre-writing activities should be available to ECD children. Hands-on exploration for learning through action and opportunities for self-expression are among the requirements highlighted by the State of the World's Children (2001:1). Finally, it is suggested that activities that encourage creativity should be a priority for four to five year olds (The State of the World's Children, 2001:2). In view of the rights based principles of quality discussed above the current study sought to establish whether the rights of ECD children were being upheld in Harare primary schools.

While the State of the World's children bases quality on rights, the Vygotsykian perspective notes that quality ECD programmes focus on the ECD child's competencies that are still under construction (Bodrova & Leong, 2005:438). Thus the key to the Vygotsykian conception of quality amplifies the children's learning and development within the age and developmentally appropriate activities. On one hand the Vygotsykian perspective emphasises the importance of scaffolding the child's developmentally based needs while on the other hand they acknowledge that

underlying skills at the centre of development are taught through content. Another view of quality ECD programmes by Johnson, Dyanda and Dzvimbo (1997:203) highlights that child health and survival are ecological concerns that influence parents' perception of quality ECD programmes. They further note that, low, average and high income parents value teacher qualification, convenience and hygiene as quality indicators in ECD programmes. However, a report on Zimbabwean ECD programmes by Kanyongo (2005:69) reveals that, quality is difficult to achieve in developing countries due to limitations in financial resources. The quality of ECD programmes is poor as financial, human and material resources are scarce, consequently compromising the holistic development of ECD children. In this view, quality is further noted in the report as the holistic development of the child and adherence to specified teacher to pupil ratio and yet because of high demand and general shortage of facilities this context of quality is not achieved (Kanyongo, 2005: 70). In view of the quality indicators highlighted above, the study sought to ascertain whether scaffolding, teacher qualification, teacher to pupil ratio, availability of resources and ecological factors were being upheld by Harare primary schools in Zimbabwe.

Research suggests that children who attend ECD programmes are highly motivated, perform better and get on better with their classmates and teachers (Kamerman, 2006:60; Bukaliya & Mubika, 2012: 30). Hyde and Kabiru (2003:22) state that ECD programmes lead to better employment records, increased family formation and a reduced likelihood of engaging in criminal activities, in the long run. It is also further highlighted that ECD education and care has a positive impact on economic development and contributes towards the reduction of gender, income and cultural inequities (Andrew & Slate, 2001:42; UNESCO, 2005:5). Anderson, Shinn, Fullilove, Fielding, Normand and Carande-Kulis (2003:37) found out that, ECD programmes have a positive impact on parental employment in that parents have breathing space and can go to work while children are under the care and supervision of ECD professionals. The positive impact of the High/Scope or Perry Project in the United States of America was notable because it showed that children who attended ECD

scored highly in IQ and language tests and more girls who attended ECD graduated in professional courses than those who had not (Hyde & Kabiru, 2003:23). A longitudinal benefit analysis of the Abecedarian Project that provided intensive preschool programmes to children from low income families in North Carolina revealed that it had highly positive results in the children's future as few of them smoked and most of them saved substantial amounts of money (Hyde & Kabiru, 2003:98).

Professional parents lobby for the inclusion of ECD programmes in primary schools as this provides them with quality professional education and care for their children (Myers, 2004:10). Furthermore, ECD programmes play a crucial role for parents, because ECD professionals promote the healthy development of the learners while their parents engage in industrial work (Ministry of Community Development and Women's Affairs [MCDWA], 1986:103; Hyde & Kabiru, 2003:24). An increasing number of working mothers choose to leave their children with the school rather than with the maid or other caregivers (Anderson et al, 2003: 38; UNESCO, 2005:10). Parents also believe that schools have professionals capable of providing a rich curriculum that will produce an all-rounded child which explains the inclusion of four to five year-olds in the primary schools (Kamerman, 2006:10: Bukaliya & Mubika, 2012: 28). Myers (2004:11) opines that parents who are happy with child-care facilities are less absent from work and are less likely to be stressed and therefore increase their production in the work place. Furthermore, parents want academic progress for their children and look up to public schools to provide quality ECD programmes that prepare their children for success later on in life (Excell & Linington, 2011:10). The current study sought to establish the quality of ECD programmes in Harare primary schools.

In a Swedish study by Myers (2004:4), a comparison of low and high quality ECD in terms of facilities and teacher training showed high social and emotional development during preschool years. Another study of Gaza, Mozambique by Martinez, Naudeu and Pereira (2012:4) concluded that ECD programmes' emphasis

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on hand-washing and personal hygiene may be linked to the reduction of diarrhea and skin problems. On the other hand, the study also concluded that children who attend ECD are more likely to be sick and, in particular, to have had a cough, which may reflect increased exposure to colds from being close to other children. The study by Cleghorn and Prochner (1997) highlights that parents who enroll their children in private preschools considered that they would be exposed to quality ECD in English, school readiness activities as well as learning to write and draw. The same study implies that quality ECD education for poor parents increases the child's ability to sing rhymes, become socialised and play with others as preparation for grade one. These lessons prepare the preschool children for grade one where there may not be enough resources to go around. The study sought to establish the perceived impact of ECD programmes as well as parents' perceptions of ECD programmes' outcomes in Harare primary schools.

In USA, Australia and Japan, where ECD programmes are offered by both private and public providers (Kamerman, 2000:20; Andrew & Slate, 2001:40), federally supported public pre-kindergarten programmes are meant for children from poor families. In these places, the majority of ECD programmes are operated by private agencies that provide educational and social enrichment for children of high income parents (Andrew & Slate, 2001:45). In South Carolina for example, the State Board of Education administers ECD programmes for three to five year olds (Andrew & Slate, 2001:42). Grade R (reception class) in South Africa is provided by public and private providers and is under the Ministry of Education and Social Welfare Department (Excell & Linington, 2011:7; Hyde & Kabiru, 2003:34). As a result, Currie (2001:220) suggests that the emphasis on preschool children's inclusion in primary schools has placed extraordinary demands on ensuring quality school readiness activities, among other things. Hyde and Kabiru (2003) state that Kenyan ECD programmes are provided by the community, NGOS, private entrepreneurs and by local authorities who charge fees, while the Government provides training for ECD teachers and trainers. The Government also provides guidelines and curriculum to

ECD teachers under the Ministry of Education and Social Services in Kenya (Hyde & Kabiru, 2003:49).

In Zimbabwe, prior to independence, ECD education was well defined for the white children and quality standards were stipulated in the legislature (Nziramasanga, 1999:42; Education Act of 1973; Shumba & Chireshe, 2013:609). Immediately after independence, Zimbabwe expanded its provision of ECD education for black children (Cleghorn & Pochner, 1997; Shumba & Chireshe, 2013:609). Most rural teachers of crèches were mothers from the community who barely had O-level education and were paid a stipend by the Government once a term. They had to be trained for service by the experienced Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) trainers who also had British O-level as the highest qualifications. To ensure quality in ECEC centres, the trainers needed to have an A' level qualification in order to be enrolled for the Bachelor of Education in Early Childhood Development at the University of Zimbabwe (Cleghorn & Pochner, 1997). The crèches and preschools were supervised by the head of a nearby primary school (Nziramasanga, 1999:42; EFA, 2005:4). The usual crèche programmes or curriculum involved games as well as rhymes and children attended school seasonally to allow their teachers to harvest their fields and to fulfill other duties (Cleghorn & Pochner 1997; Manjengwa, 1994:30). The ECD programme catered for three to six year olds and was launched both in the urban and the rural areas by the Ministry of Community Development and Women's Affairs (Manjengwa, 1994:39; Shumba & Chireshe, 2013:609). In urban areas, the ECD programme was private and run as a business and hence was not accessible to all (The Principal Director's Circular No. 20 of 2011). Of interest to the current study are the levels of teachers' qualifications, issues of quality assurance as well as the improvements that have taken place in terms of quality in teacher training and accessibility of ECD provision.

Nziramasanga (1999:48) made recommendations that ECD; A (3–4 year-olds) and B (4–5 year-olds) should be included into Zimbabwean primary schools where fees are more reasonable than in privately-owned preschools and nursery schools. This

makes education accessible to all including the four to five year olds (Nziramasanga, 1999:50; UNICEF, 2006:18). Furthermore, Director's Circular 14 of 2004 of Zimbabwe suggests that ECD embraces crèches, preschools, nursery schools and Early Childhood Education and Care centres (ECEC) which are provided by the private and public institutions and supervised by primary school heads for quality assurance. In addition, Director's Circular 12 of 2005 recommends that, in public primary schools, ECD is made up of ECD A (3–4 year olds) and B (4–5 year olds) and grades one to three.

Zimbabwe was a participant and signatory to the Jomtien Conference in Thailand in 1990 and agreed to take necessary action to universalise quality ECD education for young children (Zimbabwe Education For All, 2005). Additionally, Zimbabwe was among the 190 countries that adopted the Millennium Development Goals and committed to meeting the goal of achieving universal ECD education by 2015 and thus included 4 to 5 year olds in the primary schools. Zimbabwe has two ministries of Education and these are the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education and the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education (Zimbabwe Education For All, 2005:5). The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education caters for ECD A (3–4year olds), B (4–5 year olds), primary and secondary education (Shumba & Chireshe, 2013:609). The Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education is responsible for teacher education including the ECD specialists. This information provides a backdrop for the exploration of the ECD structure in relation to quality ECD programmes for learners and teacher education in Zimbabwe and its effect on the quality of life for the younger children in the country.

ECD is of great importance to the Zimbabwean Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (Nziramasanga, 1999:40). Currently under the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, educational provisions for the 4-5 year olds is guided by the Statutory Instrument 106 of 2005 which pegs guidelines to assure quality ECD aiming at quality health, safety, nutrition and education as indicators for the all round development of learners. While guidelines specify the quality indicators, it has

been noted that, poor quality ECD programmes are mushrooming all over Zimbabwe. Inversely, this state of affairs is in disagreement with Statutory Instrument 106 of 2005 which highlights that, ECD centres may be registered and operated only if they conform to prescribed standards such as: a total of 2,25 square metres of indoors and 5,5 square metres outdoors playing space per child. The ECD learning environment is also required to have child-sized toilets in the ratio of one toilet to eight children as well as wash basins in the ratio of six children per basin. According to Statutory Instrument 106 of 2005, the ECD environment should have child-sized furniture, hot and cold water and a pupil ratio of 20 children per teacher. The statutory instrument further prescribes that the personnel to be employed in the ECD centre should have the appropriate training in ECD or should have experience in ECD. The statutory instrument also prescribes that personnel dealing with ECD children should go for X-rays and medical check-ups every year and should they be found unhealthy should be given time off to take their medication until they are fit again to deal with ECD children. The current study sought to establish whether quality indicators in the legislature reflected the reality of the situation.

The private preschools, according to Director's circular 12 of 2005, will be under the Infant Department and will be supervised by the local school head of a nearby primary school who will manage and supervise them. To cater for quality assurance, Director's circular 12 of 2005, which is a policy document relating to the inclusion of ECD programmes in primary schools, specifies that the School Development Committees (SDCs) are expected to contribute towards the construction and furnishing of ECD centres and classrooms and should also decide on the fees to be levied. The most recent policy letter, the Principal Director's Circular no. 20 of 2011 notes that development in ECD provision is encouraging as 3610 out of 5869 primary schools countrywide have included ECD learners in the public schools which are enrolling 20 ECD learners as stipulated by the legislature. The same policy letter also notes that the majority of preschool children still need to be absorbed into the primary schools. Variables of interest in this study were the quality indicators specified by the legislature as related to the actual situation. The current study was

also interested in the administrative capacity of SDCs to provide quality physical resources and infrastructure as specified by the legislature.

The researcher has come across limited literature on quality ECD programmes in Zimbabwe. The few Zimbabwean studies in this subject include Johnson et al. (1997), UNICEF (2006), Gunhu, Mugweni and Dhlomo (2011) and Bukaliya and Mubika (2012). Johnson et al. (1997:216) focused on urban mothers' choice of the ECD children's care while UNICEF's (2006: 10) study aimed at readiness of the country to educate ECD learners. Gunhu et al. (2011) also focused on the quality of sanitary facilities for ECD learners, while Bukaliya and Mubika (2012:28) concentrated on the benefits and challenges of the inclusion of ECD children in primary schools. This study aimed at expanding the limited research in this area. The next section analyses the problem.

1.3   ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEM

1.3.1 AWARENESS OF THE PROBLEM

The researcher is interested in this area because of her professional qualification in ECD and her experience in ECD education. Prior to the recognition of ECD education in the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, the researcher worked as a preschool administrator and teacher for nine years. As ECD education in teachers' training colleges became recognised, the researcher was one of the pioneers in ECD specialist teacher education and lectured on the area for five years. She is also a part time tutor at the Zimbabwe Open University and a part time lecturer at the Women's University in Africa in the ECD area. The job description of the researcher in the Zimbabwean teachers' colleges and universities is to supervise ECD specialist students in the primary schools during their teaching practice. The researcher felt that there was need for a constant examination of the quality of ECD education in Harare primary schools in Zimbabwe.

1.3.2 Investigation of the problem

A number of studies have been done in other countries on the quality of ECD education. In South Africa, Excell and Linington (2011:9) found that ECD education is of low quality since the ECD teachers are not highly qualified and are getting minimal support from the school principals. A survey by Hyde and Kabiru (2003:46) showed that, in Kenya, Malawi, Zimbabwe and Mali, ECD education is a community responsibility. The findings further showed that the quality of ECD tuition is affected by the lack of remuneration for teachers as the communities cannot always raise funds for teachers' salaries.

In most studies, ECD education quality indicators consist of highly qualified personnel, offering guidance and counselling to the learners, having adequate human and material resources and having a child-centred learning environment (Excell & Linington, 2011:10; Hyde & Kabiru, 2003:27). The intention of this study was to ascertain whether the components of an ECD programme were in operation in Harare primary schools.

1.3.3 Statement of the problem

Pressure on public primary schools to offer quality ECD education and care in the next few years will lead to improved quality standards (Excell & Linington, 2011:7). The challenge for school heads in running ECD classes is no longer how to include the four to five year olds in the public primary schools, but rather how to sustain quality education and care (Kamerman, 2006:44). Myers (2004:17) contends that the emphasis on including preschool children into primary schools has placed extraordinary demands on ensuring quality school readiness activities, among other things. School heads are also required to learn new administrative roles and ECD teachers are required to be continuously upgrading their skills to meet the ECD learners' needs efficiently. Contrary to the expectations of the school heads and

teachers on administrative roles, it has been noted that there are a lot of mushrooming private poor quality, poorly managed and unregistered ECD centres. According to Myers (2004: 45), quality ECD programmes produce children who are ready for grade one. Quality ECD programmes also enable the parents of these ECD children to work while their children attend classes given by ECD specialists (Kamerman, 2006:25). As revealed in the background to the study, there are many teachers and administrators in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Botswana who teach ECD learners without specialised ECD training and this, in turn, affects the quality of education and care offered (Kamerman, 2006:53; UNICEF, 2000:56). The present study intended to establish the quality of ECD programmes in Zimbabwe by addressing the following main research question: What is the quality of Early Childhood Development programmes in Harare primary schools in Zimbabwe? In the next section, the sub-research questions of the study are presented.

1.3.4 Sub-research questions

The main research question of the study above was addressed through the following sub-research questions:

1.3.4.1 How are the ECD programmes in Harare primary schools organised and
      managed?

1.3.4.2 What are the components of ECD programmes in Zimbabwe?

1.3.4.3 How qualified are the ECD personnel in Harare primary schools?

1.3.4.4 How do ECD children in Harare primary schools learn?

1.3.4.5 What resources are available for ECD programmes in Harare primary
      schools?

1.3.4.6 What strategies can be used to improve the quality of ECD programmes?

1.3.5 Aims and objectives

The main aim of the study was to establish the quality of ECD programmes in Harare primary schools by comparing the reality of ECD programmes in schools with the expectations specified by the policy. The study sought to:

1.3.5.1 Analyse how ECD programmes in Harare schools are organised and managed.

1.3.5.2 Identify and discuss the components of the Zimbabwean ECD programmes.

1.3.5.3 Discuss the level of personnel qualification in Harare primary schools.

1.3.5.4 Identify the teaching methods of ECD children in Harare primary schools.

1.3.5.5 Examine the availability of resources in the ECD environment in Harare primary schools.

1.3.5.6 Suggest strategies that can be used to improve the quality of ECD programmes.

The significance of the study is discussed next.

1.3.6 Significance of the study

The researcher hopes that the study will benefit ECD administrators, teachers, parents, policy makers and ECD children. The policy makers and implementers will have criteria to ascertain quality ECD programmes and information to make decisions related to the supply of ECD programmes. Such information will make policy makers, administrators and teachers effective in the implementation and running of quality ECD programmes and provide quality indicators to ECD teachers, administrators and policy makers which will enable the primary schools to improve service delivery of ECD programmes.

This research study will add to the limited literature in Zimbabwe on the quality of ECD programmes. Furthermore, the study will provide researchers with baseline information for the development of future quality ECD studies. Policy makers and administrators will be able to use the information obtained in this study to restructure the ECD children's programmes in Zimbabwean primary schools. The findings of the study would hopefully provide information which could contribute towards good practices that promote the ECD children's rights to quality education and care. The following section discusses the assumptions of the study.

1.3.7 Assumptions of the study

For the purposes of this study, it is assumed that:

1.3.7.1 ECD is being offered in Zimbabwean primary schools;

1.3.7.2 the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education will allow the researcher to carry out the research study in Harare primary schools of Zimbabwe;

1.3.7.3 the administrators of the respective schools will cooperate in providing the required information to make the study possible;

1.3.7.3 quality education and care in Harare primary schools of Zimbabwe is determined by the government legislations and policies and therefore the quality of education and care in all the schools in this study will be more or less the same.

The theoretical framework is presented next in the study.

1.4   THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The prevailing organising framework of this study is Bronfernbrenner's ecological theory of 1979. The theory posits that people are embedded in multiple ecological settings and that the individual both affects and is affected by the environment (Pianta & Rimm-Kaufman, 2006:492). The ECD child is thus influenced by and influences the quality of teaching and learning. The most proximal influences are the multiple micro-systems within which the individual spends time, most notably the school and the family (Lahey, 2009:150; Woolfolk, 2010:130). Development, teaching and learning of ECD children is also affected by the interactions between the school and home (microsystems) and that interaction is called the mesosytem hence the need for wider parental and stakeholder involvement in ECD programmes.

The next system that influences the ECD child is the exosystem which includes distant forces such as the school system, mass media and the community (Pianta & Rimm-Kaufman, 2006:495; Woolfolk, 2010:105). For example, the City Health

Department makes decisions about the suitability of the ECD children's learning environment through inspections of the play area and other stakeholders like the Ministry of Defence impart life skills knowledge to ECD children. Woolfolk (2010:127) further suggests that the macrosystem concerns more distal inputs such as the societal, political, economic patterns and national customs and values. The ecological systems theory identifies the importance of other interactions across levels on the developing child (Pianta & Rimm-Kaufman, 2006: 495; Berk, 2009:120). Thus, the theoretical framework inspires the researcher to examine the ecology of ECD children and its effect on the quality of child development and learning and how the ECD child interacts with the ecology. Kamerman (2006:34) posits that the application of the theoretical framework would involve understanding the moderating and mediating effects as well as influences such as the play equipment, teacher qualification, ECD children's guidance and counselling in relation to child outcomes; a fairly complex framework that would shape the understanding of the quality of ECD programmes.

In general, studies have shown that high quality ECD education is positively associated with school related competencies (Excell & Linington, 2011:7; Currie, 2001:230). This goes to show that the ecological levels influence ECD programmes. Kamerman (2006:33) thus states that it can be concluded that ECD education and care confers benefits for child development and that the higher the quality of this education, the more positive the outcome. Quality in the current study is marked by the management and organisation, stakeholder involvement, parental involvement, teacher qualification, resources availability and teaching methodology in ECD programmes. Ackerman and Barnett (2009:333) agree that human development takes place through processes of progressively more complex reciprocal interactions between the individual persons and objects in the external environment that occur on a fairly regular basis over extended periods of time.

The ecological theory further suggests that the form, content, power and direction of the proximal processes affecting development vary as a function of the person,

environment and time (Pianta & Rimm-Kaufman, 2006:491; Woolfolk, 2010:100; Walker, 2008:55). This implies that, in ECD programmes, child development is dependent on the child's simple, complex and quality interactions with, for example, the play equipment, the teachers and the child-sized infrastructure. UNICEF (2000:8) agrees that learning in ECD settings is regarded as being a direct result of the child's sustained interactions with physical resources which are age appropriate and become progressively complex as the child grows. It is further suggested that social interactions between the ECD child, teachers and peers are a mechanism through which ecological forces impact on children's learning and development (Pianta & Rimm-Kaufman, 2006:493; Lahey, 2009:60). High quality interactions are characterised by positive, emotionally supportive relationships through guidance and counselling between teachers and children, the use of rich language and instructional techniques that develop concepts, well organised materials, activities and behavioural patterns (Myers, 2004:17). The current study thus sought to establish the extent of guidance and counselling and instructional techniques' impact on quality in ECD programmes.

Within this framework, teacher characteristics such as level of education, ECD specialisation and ability to deal with learners' psychosocial problems, are expected to influence the quality of children's development through interaction with social and physical resources (Myers, 2004:9). For example personnel qualification influences teacher effectiveness and yet teacher attitude has either a positive or negative impact on the quality of ECD programmes. Christie (2008:165) also identifies how classroom characteristics, such as classroom size, teacher's ability to offer day to day directive counselling, teacher-child ratio and curriculum, impact on ECD learning. As with teacher specialisation, these structural features of the programme's quality do not have a direct impact on children's development but rather influence the quality of interactions children experience in playrooms. These, in turn, affect children's development (Pianta & Kaufman, 2006:495; Anderson et al. (2003: 39). This framework thus influenced the researcher to look at the quality of ECD programmes

on the basis of teacher qualification and ability as well as child interaction with social and physical resources. The following section presents the limitations of the study.

1.5   LIMITATIONS

The greatest limitation of the study was that the researcher, as a full time lecturer, was not able to visit the schools as often as she would have wanted to cover all the schools under study and thus she limited her study to Harare primary schools. The use of qualitative design and a small sample from Harare urban primary schools made the generalisability of the findings to all Zimbabwean primary schools impossible.

1.5.1 Overcoming the limitations

To counter the limitation of lack of time, the researcher prolonged her visits for as long as possible when she visited the sites in order to get the most out of each visit. The researcher also limited her study to Harare urban for easy accessibility of primary schools. In the next section, delimitations of the study are presented.

1.6   DELIMITATIONS

The study focused on ten primary schools from twenty six suburbs in Harare. The study was primarily concerned with establishing the quality of ECD education and care of the 4–5 year olds in Harare primary schools. Having discussed the delimitations of the study, the next section presents the definition of terms.

1.7   DEFINITION OF TERMS
1.7.1 Crèche

A crèche is a public nursery school where the young children of poor families are cared for during the day while their mothers are at work (MCDWA, 1986:7). Excell

and Linington (2011:5) suggest that a crèche is a day-care centre for young children. In this study, a crèche is an ECD centre catering for zero to five year olds.

1.7.2 Counselling

Oniye and Durosaro (2009:129) view counselling as advice and support that is given to people to help them deal with problems and make important decisions. It is defined as the use of an interactive process focusing on the needs, problems or feelings of the counsellee, and significant others, in order to enhance or support coping mechanisms, problem solving and interpersonal relationships. Oniye and Durosaro (2009:130) suggest that counselling is a support process in which a counsellor holds face-to-face talks with another person to help him or her solve personal problems or improve that person's attitude, behaviour or character. It also deals with personal, social, vocational empowerment and educational concerns. Gardner (2007:204) states that counselling aims to help individuals increase their self-awareness and improve their problem solving skills. In this study, counselling is seen as the process of helping ECD children to help themselves by accepting personal responsibility for their choices. In this study, counselling is also understood as being in line with directive guidance which is characteristic of the ECD method of teaching and learning.

1.7.3 Early Childhood Development

Early Childhood Development, according to Kamerman (2006:25), is characteristic of the first stages of life, a period before formal to formal learning lasting from zero to eight year olds. The broadest definition of early childhood education, or early childhood development, is the care and education of children from birth through to age eight, and including their families. More specific definitions include: child care, birth through age eight, which occurs in various settings, including licensed child care centers, certified group homes, the home of a child or caregiver, public/private/charter schools, public settings such as gyms and primary schools (Ho,

2009:223). Surrogate care replaces parental supervision by temporarily providing a safe, healthy and developmentally appropriate environment for children. Families, corporations and sometimes state tax monies support such care of young children (Ailwood, 2003:288). In the current study, ECD refers to the four to five year olds in the pre-formal years of care and yet housed within the primary schools in Harare Primary schools in Zimbabwe.

1.7.4 Guidance

Oniye and Durosaro (2009:130) define guidance as leadership, instruction or direction or advice on educational, vocational or psychological matters. Gardner (2007:10) also states that guidance is the application of mental health and human development principles through cognitive, affective, behavioural or systematic strategies that address wellness, personal growth or career development. Mapfumo (2001:205) opines that guidance is the process of helping people to make important choices in life, such as choosing a preferred life style. Guidance is a helping relationship between the teacher and the child which attempts to give individual children assistance in play, problem solving, learning and thus facilitating the development of all areas of life. Guidance and counselling overlap but one distinction between them is that, while guidance focuses on helping individuals choose what they value most, counselling helps them to make changes. In this study, guidance is taken as a process of facilitating and directing ECD children by the ECD teachers in discovery learning and play to develop holistically.

1.7.5 Preschool

Morrison (1995:30) defines preschool as relating to, intended for, or being the early years of childhood that precede the beginning of primary school. MCDWA (1996:7) states that a preschool or nursery school is a centre for children who are not old enough to attend primary school. Preschool classrooms serve children of ages 3–5 years. Children experience a variety of meaningful activities within a play-based and

child-centered environment. Activities emerge from children's interests and abilities and allow for exploration and freedom of creative expression. They may be involved in long term projects based on the interests of individuals or the group. Children are encouraged to investigate, problem solve, work together and direct their own learning with the help of their teachers. In this study, preschool is used interchangeably with nursery school and refers to ECD children and programmes in the 3 to 5 year-old range.

1.7.6 Policy

Chireshe (2006:30) defines a policy as a set of plans or actions agreed on by a government, political party or business (Ailwood, 2003:295) which is intended to influence and determine decisions, actions and other matters such as the company's, or education sector's, personnel policy. Kamerman (2006:38) defines a policy as course of action, guiding principle or procedure considered expedient, prudent or advantageous. In this context, a policy refers to the guidelines on the implementation and running of ECD programmes in Zimbabwe.

1.7.7 Primary school

Johnson et al. (1997) and Kanyongo (2005:68) suggest that a primary school is an institution in which children receive primary education between the ages of about five to about eleven, coming before secondary school and after preschool. It is the first stage of compulsory education in most parts of the world, and is normally available without charge, but may be a fee-paying independent school. In the current study, a primary school lasts nine years and children enroll at the age of three years. The nine year cycle is divided into ECD A (3-4 year olds), ECD B (4-5 year olds), Infant grades (1 to 3) and juniour grades (4-7). At the end of primary school, the children are awarded a grade seven certificate. The ECD A and B are in the formal school and yet engage in play and pre-formal activities.

1.7.8 Quality

Hyde and Kabiru (2003:53) suggest that quality is a measure of excellence or a state of being free from defects, deficiencies, and significant variations that are brought about by strict and consistent adherence to measurable and verifiable standards to achieve uniformity of output that satisfies specific customer or user requirements. Myers (2004:16) views quality as the totality of features and characteristics of a service that bears its ability to satisfy stated or implied needs. Bodrova and Leong (2005:438) suggest that quality ECD programmes entail respect for children's rights and offering developmentally appropriate children's activities. The following components highlighted in the Statutory Instrument 106 of 2005: nutrition, health and safety, teacher qualification teacher to pupil ratio of 1:20, toilet to pupil ratio of 8:1 were among the quality indicators that influenced this study. In this study, quality refers to the ability of ECD programmes to satisfy stated or implied needs of the learners, the community and the government as stated in the Zimbabwean legislations and policies.

1.8   CONCLUSION

This chapter explored the background to the study. It was in this background that the study was placed into context with research studies related to the work under investigation. An analysis of the problem was made and the research questions were articulated. Furthermore, the purpose and significance of the study were highlighted. This chapter also discussed the aims and objectives of the study and articulated the theoretical framework that guided the study. It also looked at the limitations and delimitations of the study and defined terms used in this document. The next chapter will focus on a review of related literature.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The study aimed at establishing the quality of ECD programmes in Harare primary schools in Zimbabwe. This chapter reviews related literature on the quality of ECD programmes. The literature is reviewed under sub-headings obtained from the study's objectives. The sub-headings under which the literature is reviewed include the organisation and management of ECD programmes, components of ECD programmes which include policy in ECD, guidance and counselling, nutrition, health and safety, stakeholder involvement and parental involvement in ECD. The literature further reviews teaching methods and personnel qualification in ECD and the availability of resources in ECD. It also exposes gaps to be filled in by the present study.

2.2 ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT OF ECD PROGRAMMES

Management and organisation is viewed as a system of working with individual persons or groups for the purpose of achieving the established goals of an organisation. According to Click (2000:45), management includes planning, organising, directing and controlling. Kapfunde (2000:48) views management as being concerned with, working with and through others to achieve organisational goals. The structure and management of educational systems from preschool, primary, secondary and tertiary education across the world is more or less the same (Hyde & Kabiru, 2003:45). Pre-primary education, which is now available for children between the ages of 3 to 4 and 4 to 5, provide a sound foundation for formal education at primary level by developing the abilities, attitudes and qualities which are pre-requisites for learning among children of this age group. As a readiness programme, it is geared towards physical, social, mental and emotional development (Myers, 2004:10). This level of education is mostly implemented by private

organisations while governments have taken responsibility for development activities, registration and regulation of the ECD centres, training proprietors and the provision of a standard curriculum. A study by UNICEF (2006:23) in Zimbabwe notes that the government has stipulated management and quality assurance measures through regulations and policies. While government stipulations on management and organisation are available, the ECD programmes still suffer from mismanagement of the ecology hence the need for this study to establish the level of quality ECD programmes in relation to the Zimbabwean Government management and quality assurance tools.

In Kenya management of the 3 to 6 year-olds' programme is regarded as an important component of the primary school programme and is headed by the head teacher (Ciumwari, 2010:7). Click (2000:10) states that quality management and organisation of ECD programmes also involves the management of the ECD curriculum, content, personnel and infrastructure thereby bringing out quality education and care to the ECD child. However, due to lack of ECD specialisation, the school heads find it difficult to manage the ecological systems including: the ECD curriculum, content and infrastructure efficiently which compromises the quality of ECD programmes. It is the head teacher's duty to supervise the extent to which teachers, parents and children's activities are meeting the demands of curriculum implementation, making him or her accountable for reaching ECD goals (Mulford, 2003:12). The school heads are required to provide instructional resources, guidance and counselling and to administer teachers' salaries. In keeping with the Ecological theory, school heads may give inadequate instructional resources and guidance and counselling services to ECD children, a challenge which compromises the quality of ECD programmes. In this context, a study by Ciumwari (2010:7) highlights that time spend on guidance and counselling, discipline and on parent/teachers' discussions depends on variables such as age, gender, academic qualification and size of the school and this, in turn, affects the quality of ECD education and care. The current study sought to establish whether the school heads in Harare primary schools were

managing the curriculum, personnel, content and ECD children effectively and to ascertain the effect thereof on the quality of ECD education and care.

The provision of instructional resources is another administrative role of an ECD manager (Ciumwari, 2010:8). This depends on their understanding of the role of concrete materials in the education of ECD children which is rather low. In a study by Ciumwari (2010:9), the head teachers explained that the procurement of resources is regarded as one of their important roles in ECD education. There may be a disparity between what is expected regarding the procurement of ECD resources and what is on the ground. Hyde and Kabiru (2003:38) further suggest that consultation between head teachers and ECD teachers is one of the major administrative duties though it is centred mainly on disciplinary issues. Head teachers in the study above shunned classroom management. In this context, a study by Ciumwari (2010:9) showed that head teachers were not well informed about what the ECD curriculum should achieve and the extent to which they should directly be involved with it. In line with the Ecological theory, the school heads' poor knowledge of the ECD curriculum compromises the quality and care of young children. The study expressed concern that the school heads may be unfamiliar with the essence of ECD education which can affect the way they manage the programmes. The focus of the study was, to establish to what extent the school heads understood, implemented and managed the ECD curriculum efficiently.

Part of the management duties of a school head is to assess the ECD teaching and learning and to give demonstration lessons to ECD children for the benefit of newly qualified teachers or para-professionals. While this is a requirement, the ECD teachers' assessments and lesson demonstrations in tandem with the Ecological theory by the school heads maybe limited. In this context, a study by Hyde and Kabiru (2003:35) notes that school heads have limited involvement in the evaluation of the ECD learning environment and in their teaching abilities of ECD children. The current study sought to establish whether school heads offered professional

guidance to ECD teachers through lesson demonstrations and evaluations of the ECD learning environment.

Parents are key participants in the management and running of the ECD curriculum (Myers, 2004:8). However, due to lack of ECD specialisation, ECD parents may feel incompetent to manage and run the ECD curriculum, hence the need to trust the ECD teachers' expertise in line with the Ecological theory which suggests that parents are part of the microsystems that influence the ECD children's development. Hyde and Kabiru (2003:45) argue that parents send their children to ECD centres to prepare them for formal education. In accordance with the Ecological theory, the school head collaborates with the parents and realises ECD goals, a task which may be difficult due to lack of cooperation from parents. Parents pay levies and the school head motivates the teachers through incentives. Inversely, parents may not pay the levies hence compromising the children's quality of learning. In this view, head teachers invest time negotiating teachers' salaries with parents coaxing them to pay up the levies (Ciumwari, 2010:10). The school head engages parents to provide and maintain play materials and feeding schemes for ECD children. These management tasks maybe viewed as basic services which assist children to learn. While these services are basic, they may not be fulfilled, hence the need for the current study to identify the level of school head management and parental involvement in ECD settings and the impact thereof on the quality of ECD education and care.

According to Ciumwari (2010:14), nutrition, health and safety are key elements for quality ECD education and care. While nutrition, health and safety are key elements to quality ECD programmes in accordance with the Ecological theory which notes that the health systems as part of the microsystems, maybe poorly managed and organised. In this regard, the supply and coordination of health and safety programmes is thus another management task or element of ECD management of education and care (Myers, 2004:10; Currie, 2001:230). However, the supply and coordination of health and safety maybe poor thus compromising the quality of ECD

programmes. A study in India by UNICEF (2000:10) established that good provision, management and organisation of sanitary facilities, electricity and library facilities constituted a quality learning environment which was strongly correlated with high performance in school work. On the other hand poor provision, management and organisation of sanitary facilities impact negatively on the quality of ECD programmes. Such factors as the availability of sanitary facilities and classroom maintenance have an impact on critical learning factors (UNICEF, 2000:12). Prior to the Dakar and Jomtien Conferences, in many African countries such as Zimbabwe, Kenya, Lesotho, Ghana and Nigeria, communities played a central role in the management and organisation of ECD programmes which included nutrition, health and safety issues (Hyde & Kabiru, 2003:35; Myers, 2004:8). The Zimbabwean policy Director's Circular number 12 of 2005 explains that, on the implementation of ECD A and B programmes, the school development committees (SDCs) are required to play an active role in the construction of safe and child-friendly environments and the requisition of child-sized furniture. The SDCs as part of the ecological systems may fail to construct child-friendly environments due to financial resource shortages which consequently compromise the quality of ECD programmes. As a result, the management of public primary schools is changing significantly and a school head's role now includes the development of a safe physical environment and the control of resources such as ECD play and learning materials, teachers and learners (Mulford, 2003:10). The school head is required therefore to keep abreast with current health, nutrition and safety provisions of ECD children, to be willing to learn and to be networked fully (Kamerman, 2006:20). The school heads lobby for stakeholder cooperation, especially the health sector and parents so that they contribute human, material and financial resources required to manage a quality ECD programme (Hyde & Kabiru, 2003:35; Mulford, 2003:10). While the school heads lobby for stakeholders' contribution of human, material and financial resources, they may be faced with lack of cooperation from the partners in the ecological systems, hence the need for the current study to establish the level of stakeholder co-operation.

Faber (1998:28) says that "a well thought out programme is a pre-requisite for successful teaching in the ECD centre". To maintain quality in ECD programmes, the school head must continuously plan for the present and future of the centre and the classrooms (Myers, 2004:9). The school head therefore needs quality staff that can assist in planning an ECD programme that is flexible and provides for the individual needs of children.

The ECD educator is tasked with creating a school programme and environment in which children play while they learn and learn while they play. The main feature in a successful daily programme is the division of the learners' day into various parts, taking into consideration their concentration span and their need to learn through play (MCDWA, 1996:30; Excell & Linington, 2011:10). The current study sought to establish the quality of ECD management at administrator and classroom level and its impact on the quality of ECD education and care in Harare primary schools. As components of an ECD programme are crucial to holistic child development, the next section looks at them and their effect on the quality of education and care.

2.3   COMPONENTS OF A QUALTY ECD PRGRAMME

This section presents the components of a quality ECD programme as demonstrated by international and local literature. The components are used to create criteria for quality ECD programmes. The components include policies, nutrition, health and safety, guidance and counselling, parental involvement and stakeholder partnerships in ECD education and care.

2.3.1 Policies in ECD

A policy is a kind of action that gives guidelines and delimits action (Hyde & Kabiru, 2003:40). In ECD, a policy gives guidelines about how policy makers and implementers deal with ECD issues which give ECD administrators and teachers a sense of confidence (Kathyanga, 2011:18). The ECD policies have a mandate to

highlight interventions that integrate health, nutrition and education within the children's culture in accordance with the Ecological theory. The policies also take into consideration that parents require information and social, material and financial support from government and other funding agencies (Hyde & Kabiru, 2003:55; Waldfogel, 2006:587). It may not be possible to get financial and material support from the government which is part of the ecological systems due to financial constraints, thus compromising the quality of ECD programmes. Furthermore, an ECD policy discusses government resource allocation, partnerships and the staff responsible for training, planning and administration of ECD programmes. On the other hand ECD policies may sideline resource allocation, partnerships and the training of ECD personnel. In the US and Malawi, for example, the ECD policy seeks to promote a comprehensive approach to ECD programmes and practices for 0 to 8 year olds to fully develop their physical, emotional, social and cognitive potential (Kathyanga, 2011:18). In line with the Ecological theory, the ECD polices may not be adhered to thus compromising the quality of ECD programmes.

In the US, ECD policies can be distinguished by two dimensions. These are, firstly, universal versus targeted provision and secondly developmental or employment related (Waldfogel, 2006:584). They can thus be seen as a service providing child development or as a service supporting parental employment. The policy and regulations are thus used as quality indicators of child education and care in the US but these standards vary widely across the states (Hyde & Kabiru, 2003:36). Findings show that there are differences in the enrollment and quality of care between children from higher and from lower income families (Bierman & Erath, 2006:597). The children from high income families tend to receive high quality care while programmes from low earning families have high enrollment and poor quality education for some, but such programmes do not even reach all low income families (UNICEF, 2000:12). In the US, child care has been essentially a private decision with government bearing little or no obligation to help out with the costs except for allowing low income parents to remain employed or to prepare a disadvantaged or disabled child for school (Waldfogel, 2006:587). The current study sought to

establish if Zimbabwe has ECD policies that standardise the provision of ECD education for the low and high income earning families and whether it is employment related or developmentally oriented.

In the Nordic countries and many continental European countries, child-care is seen as a public responsibility and these countries have policies on the provision of preschool education (Hyde & Kabiru, 2003:57; Waldfogel, 2006:586). In keeping with the Ecological theory, public responsibility by the microsystems, macrosystems and exosystems of child-care promotes quality ECD programmes. In the Nordic countries, ECD or preschool education is seen as a valuable end in itself, providing a social experience for children (Waldfogel, 2006:586). A study by Waldfogel (2006:587) of Denmark, Finland and Sweden on regulations and policy revealed that, there were variations of regulations and policy on teacher-pupil ratios and teacher training leading to varied quality ECD education and care. Variations in regulations and policies of child-care may compromise the quality of ECD education and care. In Australia, policy guidelines on quality assurance include meeting certain accreditation criteria to be eligible for a government subsidy. Part of the policy includes the curriculum offered, the learning goals, the criteria for accreditation, the teacher to pupil ratio and teacher training standards (UNICEF, 2000: 13; Hyde & Kabiru, 2003:35; Waldfogel, 2006: 587). In accordance with the Ecological theory which suggests that the school forms part of the microsystems, ECD policy leads to effective curriculum implementation, achievement of learning goals and meeting the teacher training standards, thus consequently promoting the holistic development of the ECD child.

In Zanzibar, due to increased demand and the need to involve the communities that are part of the ecological systems in preschool education, the government enacted an ECD policy in 1991 that recognised community participation in the provision of ECD services (Hyde & Kabiru, 2003:52). The policy motivated partnerships and collaborations between the ecological systems which included: the Ministry of Education, individuals, communities, religious organisations, NGOS and other

agencies in the provision of ECD education. A further review of the policy in Zanzibar in 1998, motivated by the success of the Madrasa Integrated programme which increased access and quality in preschool education, stipulated that preschool education should be integrated into primary schools (Waldfogel, 2006:588). The inclusion of preschool children into primary schools as declared by the policy led to a rise in the quality of learning in Koranic schools (Hyde & Kabiru, 2003:52). Policy motivates success, collaboration and integrates ECD programmes thus promoting the quality of ECD programmes. The current study sought to identify aspects of policy in the ECD programme in Zimbabwe that promote the quality of ECD programmes.

For ECD programmes to be of quality there is need for clear policies that facilitate expansion and quality indicators in terms of funding, teacher to pupil ratio and teacher qualification, among others (Nziramasanga, 1999:40; Hyde & Kabiru, 2003:23). Policies address issues of integration of care, education, health and nutrition, universal access and increased public and private investment in ECD (Myers, 2004:10; Waldfogel, 2006:587). A study of Namibia's ECD policy, formulation and implementation led to a wider understanding of the child's holistic development as it provided guidelines for all stakeholders (Hyde & Kabiru, 2003:30; Waldfogel, 2006:390). Policy is sometimes not clear to all stakeholders and even if it is clear it is not well implemented. In support of the assertion above, a report by Hyde and Kabiru (2003:36) on policy formulation and implementation in sub-Saharan countries suggests that, while these countries have actually formulated the policies, they are facing implementation challenges as they require definition of strategies, responsibilities and provision of resources. In the current study, the researcher sought to find out whether Zimbabwean ECD programmes had policies that defined: strategies, responsibilities and provision of resources in ECD programmes.

The availability of an ECD policy in Ghana led to the mobilisation of resources to support children's programmes (UNICEF, 2000:8). However, policy may hinder resource mobilisation due to ecological dysfunction. In view of the Ghanaian study, policy led to the launching of a community based project known as "The child

school" to make learning more child-centred and integrate aspects of care, nutrition and health. Children were more attracted to ECD centres and the community willingly participated in the education and care of ECD learners (Waldfogel, 2006:384; Hyde & Kabiru, 2003:52). The training of ECD teachers in Australia and Kenya was upgraded as a result of the policy and this uplifted the quality of ECD education and care. In South Africa, an ECD pilot project was launched to test the interim ECD policy that covered children of 0 to 9 years, to investigate ways of expanding compulsory education down to the reception year or the year before formal school. Policy on curriculum, teacher training as well as funding was also tested and this brought quality to ECD programmes (UNICEF, 2000: 7; Hyde & Kabiru, 2003:52). The findings of this project revealed that, with the availability of policy, guidelines were clear on the issues tested. Policy clarifies and gives guidelines on community involvement, teacher training and resource allocation in line with the Ecological theory. Policy may sometimes not clarify and give guidelines. The study sought to ascertain whether policy clarified and gave clear guidelines on the issues highlighted above in Zimbabwe.

An evaluation of the Zimbabwean ECD policy concluded that there is a shift of ECD provision from private to public enterprise (UNICEF, 2000:25; UNICEF, 2006:20) with the policy of inclusion of ECD learners in public schools (Director's circular minute 14 of 2004). Public provision of ECD services makes it accessible to ECD children of different socio-economic status in keeping with the Ecological theory. The evaluation also revealed that the statutory instruments and their administrative tools did not sufficiently articulate issues of access and equity to the level where they compelled implementers to address those issues. The study also found a discrepancy between the policy's capacity to meet with the expectations of stakeholders' and the stakeholders' belief that the policy would meet their expectations as well as preparedness of the education systems in the short and long term to provide quality ECD education and care (UNICEF, 2006: 21).

Among the guidelines of ECD policies are: stipulations of teacher qualifications, the ability to cope with the diversity of programmes in the country and the communication channels (UNICEF, 2000:38). In accordance with the Ecological theory, the ECD policies may have limitations as teacher qualification maybe varied and the focus is on school readiness. For example, findings from a survey in Zimbabwe by UNICEF (2000:38) showed that the Zimbabwean ECD policy has discrepancies on the issues highlighted above and narrowly focused on school readiness. The current study sought to establish whether the Zimbabwean policy had specific stipulations for teacher qualification, ability to cope with diversity of programmes in the country and communication that facilitated ECD education and care. In the next section, the guidance and counselling component in ECD is discussed.

2.3.2 Guidance and counselling in ECD

According to Oniye and Durosaro (2009:129), guidance means the assistance given to someone to make him or her aware of the directions he or she is taking in life. More specifically, guidance in education is the process by which caregivers guide, pilot and direct the behaviour and development of children in their care. Preschool years represent an ideal time for interventions aimed at supporting and guiding socio-emotional development and peer interaction competencies (Bierman & Erath, 2006:596). The availability of guidance and counselling services assist ECD children to develop social competencies, but maybe lacking due to ECD teachers' lack of guidance and counselling skills. Social competencies are behavioural and social regulations in which social behaviour is displayed in a manner that is responsive to ongoing feedback and stimuli (Okeke & Ani, 2006:12). The current study sought to establish the level of guidance of social behaviour of ECD children in relation to ongoing feedback.

Oniye and Durosaro (2009:130) explain that guidance and counselling is a pre-requisite for quality teaching of ECD children. Guidance and counselling is a social

function aimed at guiding desirable growth and behaviour, allowing children to develop peaceful, fruitful and productive behaviour that would not be harmful to them or society. Guidance and counselling is provided by the ECD teacher, acting *in loco parentis* (Oniye & Durosaro, 2009:135). Guidance and counselling enhances the quality of ECD programmes as children develop productive behaviours. Inversely, a study by Okeke and Ani (2006:12) noted that in Nigeria, most preschools and primary schools have no guidance and counselling units. This jeopardises the quality of ECD education and care that could be of help to the ECD children giving them the right physical, psychological and social setting for growth and development (Okeke & Ani, 2006:15; Ogunsanmi, 2011:2). The current study sought to observe whether Zimbabwean ECD programmes had a counselling services component that helped children develop physically, socially, emotionally and psychologically.

Guidance and counselling offered by ECD teachers should focus on character development, moral education and habit formation (Oniye & Durosaro, 2009:134). Good and bad habits are learnt and unlearned (Asonibare, 2004:12) hence the care givers' main aim is to facilitate appropriate behaviour in ECD children because this may influence other children's behaviour (Oniye & Durosaro, 2009:136). ECD teachers in line with the Ecological systems theory try to ensure that children are guided and counselled to display appropriate behaviour though they may find the task difficult. The study intended to establish whether ECD children got guidance and counselling services from their teachers in Zimbabwe since it is a quality indicator in ECD programmes.

A European longitudinal study by Barnett (2004:7) on behaviour guidance policies in which teachers supported children in rationalising and talking through their conflicts concluded that there was often no follow-up on children's misbehaviour and, on many occasions, children were distracted or admonished in negative ways. Follow-up on children's behaviour enhances the quality of ECD programmes. A study by Bierman and Erath (2006:603) highlighted that the teacher-led curriculum targeting the behaviour of ECD learners is dependent on the teacher-child relationship. High

levels of teacher sensitivity and support are associated with reductions in aggressive behaviour by children. Conflict resolution management styles by teachers provide models for ECD children that influence their approach towards their peers by promoting self-regulation of attention-seeking behaviour (Asonibare, 2004:13). However, a negative approach to guidance and counselling compromises the quality of ECD programmes.

Guided practice activities designed for ECD children utilise pictures, role-playing and group interaction to teach social skills associated with emotion, understanding and social problem solving (Hyde & Kabiru, 2003:56). In tandem with the Ecological theory, guided practice for ECD children promotes children's self-knowledge, confidence and self-actualisation, though it may not be possible sometimes due to ECD teacher incompetence. In contrast, Bierman and Erath (2006:603) explain that children became less impulsive with the use of guided practice strategies by the teachers which helped young children to develop their cognitive capacities to recognise and assess social problems, foster self-regulation and positive social interaction in the classroom. The study further highlights that, training ECD children to use alternative thinking strategies in Head Start programmes showed positive levels of social ratings at the end of one year (Bierman & Erath, 2006:605). The use of alternative thinking strategies enhances ECD children's ability to fit into societal roles in keeping with the Ecological theory which notes that ECD children influence the ecology. The alternative thinking strategies included helping, taking turns, being a funny and friendly play partner, being able to identify own and others' feelings, self-control, complimenting self and others and being able to calm down, identify problems and select the best solution. The study sought to investigate Zimbabwean teacher abilities to offer positive guidance and counselling services to ECD learners.

As nutrition, health and safety are important components of ECD education and care, the next section deals with these issues.

2.3.3 Nutrition, health and safety in ECD

Marotz, Cross and Rush (2012:10) define nutrition as all processes used by a human being to take in food, and to digest, absorb, transport, utilise and excrete food substances. Hyde and Kabiru (2003:10) define health as a state or quality of total, physical, mental and social well being where each element is considered to have an equal contribution. The provision of health, nutrition and safety promotes and supports the ECD children's well being. Health factors include cleanliness, environmental influences, consideration of children with health problems or learning needs, nutrition, learning behaviour, licensing of the programme and immunisations stipulated by the government (Govindasamy, 2010:65). Physically and psychologically healthy children learn well (Myers, 2004:5; UNICEF, 2000:5) and a healthy development, especially in early years, provides the basis for successful formal experience (Govindasamy, 2010:10). Adequate nutrition is critical for normal brain development and early detection and intervention of disabilities gives children the best chance for healthy development (Gunhu et al, 2011:138). Though adequate nutrition is crucial, it may be lacking consequently interfering with healthy developmental patterns of ECD children. Inversely, safety factors such as on-site availability of sanitary facilities, clean water supply, classroom maintenance, adequate space and the availability of appropriate furniture have an impact on the quality of ECD education (Myers, 2004:10). When the philosophy, curriculum, hiring of teaching staff, allocation of funds, arrangement of indoor and outdoor environment and collection of materials required is considered and implemented, safety is also taken into account (Govindasamy, 2010:65). The philosophy, curriculum, allocation of funds and arrangement of indoor and outdoor environment may not account for the safety of ECD children, hence the need to establish whether safety issues were addressed in line with the Ecological theory and the impact thereof on the quality of ECD programmes. Increasingly, the benefits of preventive health, nutrition, and safety are becoming a quality indicator as suggested by the Zimbabwean Statutory Instrument 106 of 2005. Poor standards of health are seen

by Ackerman and Barnett (2009:315) as significant barriers to ECD children's ability to learn and become healthy producing adults. A study by Gunhu et al. (2011:139) on adequacy and appropriateness of water, sanitation and hygiene in Masvingo rural areas concluded that the recommendations made in the Statutory Instrument 106 of 2005 were irrelevant. The Masvingo schools in the study did not have age appropriate toilets for 3 to 5 year-olds and this compromised the quality of ECD programmes. The current study sought to establish how health, nutrition and safety components were being implemented in Harare primary schools in Zimbabwe.

The International Convention on Human Rights Article 24 maintains that member states should recognise the right of the child to enjoyment of the highest attainable standards of health by way of combating disease and malnutrition through the provision of adequate nutritious food (Gunhu et al, 2011:140). Education and health are inseparable as nutrition deficiency, diarrhea and worm infestations, related to inadequate sanitation and hygiene affect education (UNICEF, 2006:49). Studies in Bangladesh by UNICEF (2006:50) on de-worming and adequate sanitation found an increase in attendance and performance of learners when these were implemented. Poor sanitation leads to poor attendance and performance of learners consequently compromising the quality of ECD programmes. A Tanzanian study by Hyde and Kabiru (2003:56) also suggested that there was an increase in school attendance when clean water was available. Findings in a study by OECD (2006:37) on the evaluation of the impact of de-worming in Western Kenya highlight that worms in children contribute 25% to the overall absenteeism in schools. The same study warns that worm infestation affects IQ levels threatening children's cognitive development.

Water, sanitation and good health encourage behaviour development in children in line with the ecological theory. They participate more, the burden of diseases can be lifted and their opportunities are expanded (Hyde & Kabiru, 2003:58). The current study sought to establish whether water availability and sanitary facilities contributed to the quality of ECD programmes.

OECD (2006:30) highlights that the physical, emotional and cognitive development of children is a by-product of their health, nutrition and safety status. Poor sanitation exposes children to diseases and the concomitant poor academic performance (UNICEF, 2000:8). Gunhu et al. (2011:138) state that a comprehensive health and safety programme ensures that a centre or school is prepared for children by putting water and sanitation infrastructure in place before enrollment. The availability of a health and safety programme enhances the children's physical and social development culminating in quality ECD programmes. A study by Gunhu et al. (2011:139) showed that the availability of soap for washing hands resulted in low incidences of diarrhea and high attendance figures at school. Contrary to the above findings, an evaluation of school sanitation and hygiene education programmes in Burkina Faso, Zambia, Columbia, Nicaragua, Nepal and Vietnam revealed that the unavailability of soap was a major problem in most schools (UNICEF, 2006:20). Gunhu et al. (2011:139) found that water was scarce in schools in Masvingo and that the child-toilet ratio was above the stipulated 8:1 squat holes by the statutory Instrument 106 of 2005. In this context the study sought to establish the toilet to pupil ratio and the impact thereof on the quality of ECD programmes.

School heads and teachers' perceptions regarding hygiene indicated that they were concerned about the non-availability of child-sized sanitary facilities and water. They were also concerned about job-related factors such as the large teacher to pupil ratio as it affected the supervision of sanitary facilities (Waldfogel, 2006: 585) which in turn, affected the quality of education and care they were able to provide. The study sought to establish the influence of job-related factors to the quality of ECD programmes. The next section looks at the parental involvement component.

2.3.4 Parental involvement in ECD

Parental involvement in the preschool children's education and care is associated with improved academic success (UNICEF, 2000:6; Zellman & Perlman, 2006:525).

Parents form part of the micro-systems in accordance with the Ecological theory. However, parental involvement in ECD may be poor due to commitments and poor attitudes. Inversely, parental involvement in the school entails teacher-parent conferences, workshops, telephone conversations with teachers and through informal communications on the welfare of the ECD children while picking up and dropping them off at school (Zellman & Perlman, 2006:522). In a study of parental involvement in Head Start programmes by Ackerman and Barnett (2009:322), parents who were found to be attending workshops and volunteer services created a positive relationship between the school and the parents. On the other hand, some parents found it difficult to be fully involved in the Head Start programmes due to their work schedules. As a result, such parents lacked understanding of their children's need for social and physical contact, language and cognitive development. The same study highlights that there is an absence of disciplinary skills in children whose parents are unable to structure their home environments and which, in turn, affect the children's learning processes in school (Young, 2003:10). Another study by Zellman and Perlman (2006:525) explains that more communication between parents and teachers is associated with high levels of quality child-care in classrooms. Poor communication between the micro-systems compromises the quality of ECD programmes.

Parents' volunteering of their services is another way for parents to take part in their children's schooling. Parents who participate in school development committees (SDCs) get involved in decision-making for the school. For example, Barnett (2004:4) says that parents' involvement in school councils in the US enabled the committee members to understand ECD processes and in turn, educated the parents on the benefits of ECD education and care. Parents' visits, their communication with service providers and their volunteering of themselves, are important quality indicators. While parents' visits and their communication are important indicators to quality, sometimes the parents do not make follow ups. A survey conducted by Georgia University concluded that when parents were informed regularly about their pre-kindergarten children's progress, a high percentage of them made an effort to chat

with their children's teachers regularly (UNICEF, 2000:6). Another study by Zellman and Perlman (2006:525) revealed that constant communication between parents and teachers was associated with more sensitive teacher-child, parent-child and/or parent-teacher interactions. The current study sought to establish the rate of parental involvement in decision making and communication between ECD children's parents and teachers in Harare primary schools.

Parental involvement in ECD education and care is a quality indicator as shown by the development of school readiness in children (Kipkorir & Njenga, 1997:23). Ackerman and Barnett (2009:5), in a study of pre-kindergartens in Georgia, concluded that parental involvement can promote children's school readiness, academic achievement and can lead to fewer behavioural problems. Miranda (2004:48), in an evaluation of Chicago public schools on child parent centres, agreed that parental involvement was associated with greater reading achievement and that these children were more academically successful. Parental involvement in ECD settings entails parent-school communication which includes information sent home with children and informal meetings while dropping or picking children (Kipkorir & Njenga, 1997:34; Ciumwari, 2010:12). Parental involvement facilitates partnerships of the microsystems consequently promoting the quality of ECD programmes. Parental involvement also means the formation of SDCs responsible for the construction of ECD infrastructure as suggested by the Director's Circular Number 15 of 2005 of Zimbabwe. However, due to economic hardships, parents as part of the microsystems in keeping with the Ecological theory find it difficult to construct the ECD infrastructure. They also find it difficult to reinforce what is learnt at school due to limitations in teaching methodologies. In this context, Myers (2004:8) explains that when parents reinforce what is learnt at school, their children are able to master skills and concepts. Quality ECD programmes are therefore enhanced by parental involvement in classrooms as resource persons or as volunteers assisting with field trips (Ackerman & Barnett, 2009:327). The study sought to ascertain the extent of parental involvement in ECD education and care in Harare primary schools and its effect on the quality of ECD programmes.

Parental involvement in ECD may be limited if goals are not clear (Zellman & Perlman, 2006:522), or if working parents have limited time to participate on advisory boards or in parent teacher programmes. Clarity of goals of parental involvement enhances holistic development of ECD children. A baseline study of Belarusian parental involvement by the World Bank (2010:2) shows that parents who have limited participation in school may lack parental skills and support systems. Constant participation of parents in ECD programmes is likely to promote the quality of ECD education and care in accordance with the Ecological theory. Voluntary participation by parents helps the school to function and cope with financial challenges (Zellman & Perlman, 2006:522) and parental involvement is associated with children having fewer behavioural problems and lower dropout figures (Zellman & Perlman, 2006:523). The current study sought to establish the influence of parental involvement on the quality of ECD programmes.

Given the importance of involving parents in ECD, teachers and administrators devote less time to parental involvement (Zellman & Perlman, 2006:524) and yet it increases a child's confidence which, in turn, promotes the child's desire to learn (Govindasamy, 2010:38). Barnett (2004:3) notes that parental involvement in US schools contributes to the smooth transition of ECD learners to formal schools and prepares parents for later involvement in their children's learning. The same study shows that parents who participated in the affairs of the school had higher aspirations for their children and were more satisfied with their children's school performance. This gave their children positive encouragement to learn. Parental involvement may also inform parents about the curricula and expectations and might proxy good parenting and pride in their children's achievements (Zellman & Perlman, 2006:523). Parents' knowledge of the curricula may promote the child's academic achievement in line with the Ecological theory which highlights that parents are part of the microsystems. Research has highlighted that, generally, parents who volunteer have more resources, including time, and are more likely to be involved in other

aspects of their child's lives (Ackerman & Barnett, 2009:318). The current study intended to establish the motive of parental involvement in ECD programmes.

Parental involvement in school can be regarded as a means of integrating the children's school experiences with those of the family (Govindasamy, 2010:38). Parents studied by Ackerman and Barnett (2009:324) noted that talking with ECD teachers about their own personal problems gave them positive encouragement which, in turn, made them emotionally able to deal with their children's learning and development. By spending quality time in the ECD centre through informal communication with the teacher, parents could also acquire valuable qualitative information about their children that could facilitate a smoother transition from school to home (Myers, 2004:20; Zellman & Perlman, 2006:525). For example, parents may adopt the behavioural control approaches that trained caregivers apply and this, in turn, will help them relate better with their children (Kamerman, 2006: 30; Zellman & Perlman, 2006:525). A study by Zellman and Perlman (2006:525) concluded that children whose parents volunteered at the service provider were more likely to be securely attached to both the parent and the teacher and this boosted their self-esteem and improved their mastery of concepts and explorations. The study sought to establish the benefits of parental involvement in the quality of ECD programmes.

Parents who drop off and pick up their children should facilitate parent/staff contact (Zellman & Perlman, 2006:525) but if parents do not enter the centre, this partnership is not formed even though the parents and the teachers are pursuing the same goal (UNICEF, 2000:10). Inspite of the compelling reasons to involve parents, there appears to be no consensus concerning the best way to use the limited time that parents spend with teachers. In the morning, the parents are in a hurry and in the evening the caregivers are too busy to attend to the parents at length (Zellman & Perlman, 2006:526). ECD teachers' encouragement of parents to visit the ECD centre, provided the parents with information about a sick child, gave parents ideas of promoting healthy development as well as holding parent/teacher

meetings at least once a year, promoted good behaviour in the children. This also improved parents' perceptions of the ECD centres on the interpersonal relationships between the teachers and the parents (UNICEF, 2000:11).

Teachers and parents as partners in the ecological systems should establish relationships that are formed on behalf of the child. That partnership fosters ECD children's learning and growth and consequently the quality of ECD programmes. The caregivers can help parents understand their children, foster learning and growth and discover accessible child-friendly activities (Zellman & Perlman, 2006:527). Parental involvement is often touted as a correlate of quality ECD education. Studies on parents volunteering in the ECD centres showed positive results (Hyde & Kabiru, 2003:35). On the other hand, if parental involvement is too high, it may be a sign that teachers are not performing well and parents want to cover up for that gap or parental involvement maybe because parents want to help out genuinely (Ailwood, 2003:289). The study sought to get in touch with the extent of parental involvement in Harare primary schools and its effect on quality ECD education. The following section presents reviewed literature on stakeholder partnerships.

2.3.5 Stakeholder partnerships

Well coordinated stakeholder partnerships promote the quality of ECD education and care (Waldfogel, 2006:584). However, historically, the care and education of young children has developed separately leading to fractured and uncoordinated systems of governance and partnerships (OECD, 2006:48).

In the United States, for example, 69 federal programmes supported education and care. Nine different federal agencies administered these programmes even though most were operated under Health and Education ministries. In Ireland, seven different ministries or agencies have had responsibility for one aspect of children's services (OECD, 2006:48). The poor partnership translates into a two-tier

organisation of services, child care for younger children and pre-primary for the three to six year-olds. The result can be a lack of coherence with a confusing variety of funding streams, operational procedures, regulatory frameworks, staff training and qualifications (Hyde & Kabiru, 2003:42). Clarity and coherence in funding and staff training enhances the quality of the ECD children's learning and development.

Due to a lack of collaboration by stakeholders, child-care can become a patchwork of small scale providers and individual family day carers (Hyde & Kabiru, 2003:42). Inversely, according to OECD (2006:49), poor quality ECD centres often lack partnerships and the teachers lack qualifications and are not properly remunerated. On the other hand, early education services operating with school networks and stakeholder partnerships have their teachers enjoying remuneration equivalent to that of primary school teachers and this, in turn, has a positive impact on the quality of ECD education and care (Zellman & Perlman, 2006:528). ECD programmes also tend to be fragmented because governments see early care as the private responsibility of parents and not a public obligation which affects the quality of ECD education and care (Hyde & Kabiru, 2003:43). The fragmentation of the government systems in accordance with the Ecological theory which suggests that the government is part of the exosystems impacts negatively on the quality of ECD programmes. The study sought to establish the extent of stakeholder collaboration in ECD programmes.

Hyde and Kabiru (2003:35) are of the opinion that well coordinated efforts of different partners including communities, parents and civil society, local and national governments, nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) and funding agencies lead to an increase in the quality of ECD programmes (UNICEF, 2000:10; Myers, 2004:10). Partnerships involve a process of mutual collaboration in which all parties contribute according to their expertise, resources and experiences (UNICEF, 2000:12). The different partners symbolise the ecological systems and well coordinated collaboration impacts positively on the quality of ECD programmes. Reports from studies in Kenya, Namibia, South Africa, Senegal and Mali by Hyde and Kabiru

(2003:34) suggest that, the existence of an inter-ministerial body facilitates the coordination of policies and actions leading to quality ECD programmes through support given to families, caregivers and communities. The absence of an inter-ministerial body compromises the functioning of ecological systems which comprises of different ministries, consequently compromising the quality of ECD programmes. National networks and associations of ECD stakeholders facilitate exchanges and sharing of information and experiences (UNICEF, 2000:13). Stakeholder partnerships that are coordinated at centralised and local levels highlight a holistic approach to ECD as well as respect for cultural practices and beliefs. Poor coordination of stakeholder partnerships compromises collaboration of the ecological systems which impacts negatively on the quality of ECD education and care. The study sought to establish whether stakeholder partnerships highlighted a holistic approach to ECD programmes. The next sub-section presents literature on coordinated partnerships at a centralised level.

2.3.5.1 Coordinated partnerships at a centralised level

ECD is concerned with providing coordinated education and care to young children but is also linked with women's employment and equality opportunities, child development and poverty issues, labour market supply, children's health, social welfare and early education (OECD, 2006:49). Promotion of equality and early education enhances holistic development of ECD children. The policy is either inter-departmentally and/or inter-governmentally collaborated. In Canada and Denmark, for example, such partnerships are supported by an administrative unit and a children's committee exists at cabinet level chaired by the Minister of Finance (OECD, 2006:49). Choi (2005:10) provides evidence that such partnerships work when established for a specific purpose for example, to coordinate a particular issue in ECD.

However, in the absence of a lead ministry with sound knowledge of ECD and a mobilising agenda for young children, government finance departments may treat children's services as public expenditure which can negatively affect the quality of

ECD services (OECD, 2006:49). In tandem with the Ecological theory, a lead ministry with sound knowledge of ECD enhances children's play, learning and development. In keeping with the Ecological theory, ministries working together therefore constitute real progress in child development. OECD (2006:50) highlights that, when ECD issues are the central goal or vision, and a dedicated ministry is coordinating them, progress is made. The current study sought to establish whether there was a lead ministry that collaborated ECD issues and its effect thereof on the quality of education and care in primary schools in Zimbabwe.

OECD (2006:49) suggests that having a lead ministry in ECD education and care leads to more effective collaboration in the quality of ECD programmes but in a fragmented system, children are defined as dependents or simply in need of child care services. As a result, these services are offered by non-accredited child minders and unqualified staff (Hyde & Kabiru, 2003:42). ECD services offered by accredited service providers enhance the ECD children's problem solving and life skills. In this view, one lead ministry leads to continuity in children's early childhood experiences as variations in access and quality care are minimised and links at the service level across age groups and settings are made. It also leads to improved public management of services, leading to better quality and greater access by parents to these services (OECD, 2006:51). The lead ministry may mislead the running of ECD programmes leading to poor quality ECD programmes. The current study sought to establish whether there was centralised partnership collaboration and its effects thereof on the quality of ECD programmes. In the following sub-section, literature on collaboration and partnership of stakeholders at a local level is discussed.

2.3.5.2 Collaboration and partnership at a local level

One of the strengths of ECD policies at a local level is partnerships which encourage participation of various stakeholders such as the community, the health sector, councils and parents to provide adequately for the total needs of children (Kipkorir & Njenga, 1997:8; Hyde & Kabiru, 2003:48). Parents and communities are the most important partners in ECD, for example, in Kenya, parents and local communities

started and managed 75% of the pre-schools providing land and funds for construction and maintenance of these facilities (Kipkorir & Njenga, 1997:9; OECD, 2006:48). They provided furniture, materials and paid teachers' salaries (UNICEF 2000:12) and in some instances, initiated community based programmes which included cooking for ECD children (Waldfogel, 2006:582). In accordance with the Ecological theory, parents are regarded as part of the microsystems and their taking part as resource persons in parental education programmes shows that parents and local communities are important partners in ECD education and care. On the other hand parents may not be empowered to take initiative in running ECD programmes and to act as resource persons. The current study sought to establish whether the parents and communities were fully involved in ECD programmes and felt that they were important and empowered partners.

At the district level, local authorities are very important partners because they subsidise the cost of running ECD centres (Kipkorir & Njenga, 1997:10; Waldfogel, 2006:585). In Kenya, the local authorities' support lies in providing material and equipment and payment of teachers' salaries. In some cases, they assist local communities in providing physical facilities and furniture. On the other hand local authorities as part of the microsystems may not be supportive of ECD programmes. It is thus important that districts are part of the ECD education and care partnerships. The current study sought to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the local authority as partners in contributing towards ECD programmes in Zimbabwean primary schools.

Voluntary organisations, religious bodies and companies can also be partners in ECD education and care (Hyde & Kabiru, 2003:43; Kipkorir & Njenga, 1997:10). In African countries such as Kenya, Malawi, Zimbabwe and Namibia, for example, church organisations have established pre-schools and ECD training centres (Kamerman, 2006:30; Hyde & Kabiru, 2003:43; UNICEF, 2000:9). Although sponsors are responsible for the overall administration, parents are also involved in decision making (Kipkorir & Njenga, 1997:10; Nziramasanga, 1999; Hyde & Kabiru, 2003:43).

Voluntary organisations have been instrumental in providing quality ECD education and care (Cleghorn & Prochner, 1997; Waldfogel, 2006: 586). These voluntary organisations provide physical facilities, materials, furniture, feeding programmes, and payment of teachers' salaries. The voluntary organisations as part of the ecological systems may not cope with ECD children's demands since the Governments do not commit themselves to funding ECD programmes. The current study sought to establish whether the NGOs, and church organisations were partners in ECD programmes and were fully coordinated in Harare primary schools.

Inter-ministerial partnerships at local levels are also important as failure to collaborate may lead to duplication of duties (Hyde & Kabiru, 2003:44). The Ministry of Education in Kenya is responsible for overall administration, policy and professional guidance of staff, grants for training staff at all levels, curriculum development and conducting research and evaluation (Kipkorir & Njenga, 1997:12). Other ministries such as the Ministry of Health are responsible for medical services to school children in collaboration with local communities and education officers. In Zimbabwe, the Ministry of Health carries out health inspections, offers immunisations and provides health education to the community, amongst others (UNICEF, 2006:56). Inversely, the Ministry of Health as part of the ecological systems may offer poor health facilities and services for ECD children thus compromising the ECD children's health. The Ministry of Social Welfare participates in encouraging communities to increase and improve facilities for better growth and development of children. Other partners such as UNICEF, Bernard van Leer Foundation and Save the Children have been supportive towards the education and care of ECD children in Malawi, Zimbabwe, Mali, Namibia and other countries (Hyde & Kabiru, 2003:43). In tandem with the Ecological theory, NGOs promote the holistic development of ECD children through funding and donation of play equipment. This study sought to establish how the ministries and NGOs collaborated to provide quality ECD programmes in Harare primary schools in Zimbabwe. The next section looks at the teaching methods that are employed in ECD.

2.4   TEACHING METHODS IN ECD

Zembat and Zulfikar (2006:605) showed that stories and tales have important effects in mathematical concept development such as geometry, measurement and graphic abilities. The teaching methods and techniques have functional qualities that help children to be more attentive, develop memory capacity, get cues easily and join the learning process (Miranda, 2004:49). It is thus necessary to prepare the curriculum to include these different teaching methods and techniques so that children acquire learning skills and develop appropriately during the pre-school period when they are receptive to learning (Zembat & Zulfikar, 2006:603). The approaches of ECD learning include recognising individual differences which in turn, lead to the active participation of children. A study by Rotumoi and Too (2012:4) agreed saying that it is necessary to implement teaching methods that involve activities based on senses and that instructional resources are influenced by the choice of teaching methods used in ECD (Zembat & Zulfikar, 2006: 604). If learners are to benefit from them, teaching methods must be determined by the child's level of conceptual development. However, there is a tendency by teachers to use teaching methods that are not effective (Rotumoi & Too, 2012:3). The current study sought to establish whether the teaching methods used by the ECD teachers were effective.

Teaching methods used by the teachers strongly influence the quality of ECD programmes in that, children's early literacy mastery as well as their holistic development is enhanced (UNICEF, 2000:7; Excell & Linington, 2011:11). Teaching methods coupled with the choice of appropriate teaching content influences the quality of ECD children's learning positively or negatively (Myers, 2004:8). Research on pre-school children's learning has shown that children learn through play which leads to holistic development in goal-directed ECD centres (Kamerman, 2000:12; Johansson & Pramling-Samuelsson, 2006:50). For example, the University of North Carolina's Abecedarian early childhood intervention programme found that children, who received an enriched, play-oriented early childhood programme, had higher IQs

at the age of five than a comparable group of children who did not get a play-oriented programme (Johansson & Pramling-Samuelsson, 2006:53).

In a play-oriented early childhood programme, there must be an osculation between fantasy and reality, the positions of the teacher and the child have both to be equally interested and curious, both teacher and child should be actively involved and there should be space for children's initiatives and ideas (Excell & Linington 2011:11). Johansson and Pramling-Samuelsson (2006:56) suggest that play; work and love should be the three main criteria for an ECD model of education. Play, work and love enable the ECD children to adopt societal roles and policies in keeping with the Ecological theory resultantly enhancing their holistic development. The intention of this study was to establish whether the ECD programmes in Zimbabwe were using child-centred methods of teaching as a quality measure of ECD programmes.

Ailwood (2003:286) explains that play in ECD forms a significant nodal point at which understanding of childhood, motherhood, family, psychology and citizenship collide. Play enhances learning in ECD children. Play is viewed as progress and is assumed to always be a positive teaching method. Play is divided into physical, social, fantasy and games with rules describing each in developmental terms (Ailwood, 2003:289; Rotumoi & Too, 2012:10). According to Mulford (2003:12), play behaviours are characterised by active participation, intrinsic motivation, attention to means rather than ends and freedom from external rules. Play is thus non-serious, enjoyable, social and often includes fantasy. Ailwood (2003:289) argues that, these play characteristics are not readily available in ECD settings which may be regulated by a timetable that often includes inside and outside activities.

From a developmental perspective, play as a teaching method, is a primary vehicle and indicator for children's mental growth (Ailwood, 2003:290). In line with the Ecological theory which suggests that children interact with the ecology, play promotes cognitive development and maturation of ECD children. Child initiated, teacher-directed and child-directed play is an essential component of

developmentally appropriate practice which links with the Vygotsykian notion of zone of proximal development (Miranda, 2004:48). Play is regulated by the physical space in which it occurs, the presence of adults and the availability of resources. In ECD, dramatic play marks the whole of play and involves song, dance, rhymes and role-playing among others. In the next sub-section dramatic play is discussed.

2.4.1 Dramatic play

It is widely accepted that play is an activity that leads to development in children (Rotumoi & Too, 2012:10). Children learn best when they act upon their environment and construct knowledge for themselves (Ailwood, 2003:290). Children perform with concrete objects which are symbols for something they have experienced directly or indirectly. Children from three years onwards, through play, explore the world through physical actions to experiment with their movements and discover what they can do. According to Ailwood (2003:289), children become presenters of their experiences and doers of their activities. In representational play, preschoolers use speech and language and become storytellers of pretend events. Dramatic play is an imitation of reality of the microsystems and children create themes and act them out by participating in various roles (Myers, 2004:10). By so doing, they are able to imitate the physical world and human relationships through symbolic representations (Ackerman & Barnett, 2009:333; Ailwood, 2003:290). In keeping with the Ecological theory the imitation of the physical world equips ECD children who are at the centre of the ecological systems with life skills required in the adult world.

Research suggests that engaging in dramatic play can have effects on children's cognitive development, learning, peer relationships and emotional well-being (Ailwood, 2003:292). Dramatic play enhances problem solving, socialisation and life coping skills in ECD children. Researchers have concluded that children who actively participate in dramatic play during preschool have advanced intellectual development and the ability to think inventively (Excell & Linington, 2011:10). During play, children practice skills which they acquired during non-play situations. Without

practice, their skills and knowledge would be lost. According to Ailwood (2003:290), play allows them to assimilate information they are gathering from their environment into their minds and helps them to make sense of it. Through dramatic play, they are able to find ways to "own" their knowledge. The current study sought to establish the impact of dramatic play on children's learning in ECD programmes.

Dramatic play can also be viewed from a preparation for life perspective. The ECD children are able to question things and to learn about the world in ways that make sense to them (Fedorezak, 2001:12). Play is self-motivated practice in meaning making and its themes are repeated over and over until the child is satisfied that he or she understands them. By participating in dramatic play, Ailwood (2003:291) argues that children are developing learning and problem-solving skills. Participation in socio-dramatic play promotes high levels of social ability, including cooperation, negotiation, sharing, problem solving and appreciation of others' play efforts in accordance with the Ecological theory.

The amount and complexity of fantasy play have been found to be predictors of social skills, popularity and positive social activity (Myers, 2004:8; UNICEF, 2000:34). Through participation in socio-dramatic play, children develop skills necessary to regulate their own actions in order to keep the play going, to control themselves and their emotions, to be flexible in their responses to other players and to transition from being egocentric to social beings (Ailwood, 2003:290). Similarly, dramatic play also enables ECD children to express their feelings through a safe outlet (Hyde & Kabiru, 2003:38). Playing out experiences and feelings is a dynamic healing process in which children engage themselves. Dramatic play enables children to use toys, to say things they cannot verbalise, to do things they would otherwise feel uncomfortable doing and to express feelings and emotions they might be reprimanded for expressing in other contexts. As children act out relationships and experience, putting themselves in another person's shoes, they are led to sophisticated understanding of themselves and others. Dramatic play thus leads children to increased happiness, more positive self-images and feelings of power

(Frost, Wortham & Reifel, 2001:15). The current study sought to establish the extent of dramatic play usage in ECD programmes in Harare primary schools.

The environment of the playground is important because where children play directly impacts how children interact with each other and affects the cognitive level and intensity of play which is regarded as a method of learning (Fedorezak, 2001:13). Designers of play spaces need to consider the individual, cultural and social needs of children in order to create environments which promote play (Rahman, Yassin & Yassin, 2012:10). In keeping with the Ecological theory the consideration of individualism and culture promotes a quality child-sensitive learning environment. The study sought to ascertain whether ECD children were exposed to dramatic play and its effect on the quality of ECD programmes in Harare primary schools in Zimbabwe. The next sub-section presents literature on songs and rhymes.

2.4.2 Songs and rhymes

Song is an integral part of children's lives and quality of learning (Young, 2003:48). In line with the Ecological theory, when children's play features song as a component, the early childhood education community believes that it fosters children's learning and development. From birth, music is an intuitive form of communication between mother and child (Miranda, 2004:59). The use of song, for example, has been demonstrated to facilitate the development of literacy skills in young children (Berk, 2009:55). In particular, involvement in music has resulted in an increase in young children's vocabulary and increased auditory language (De Veries, 2006:269). Young children's engagement in developmentally appropriate singing also has links to literacy development (Young, 2003:48). Music in ECD also leads to increased socialisation and releasing of extra energy (Miranda 2004:61). A study by De Veries (2006:268) of teachers who were exposed to music training skills showed that when children were engaged in music, there was an increased socialisation among them. Children release pent up energy while music provides a mode of self-expression and focuses their listening.

Music in the ECD children's classroom has to become part of the children's day, whether this be singing rhymes and songs as part of care routines or responding to, encouraging, talking about and joining with children's spontaneous play (Young, 2003:48). As part of the microsystems, ECD educators need to understand and be able to implement a variety of musical activities that are appropriate for young children, including singing and playing instruments (Berk, 2009:58). Educators need to include song with other arts areas such as dance and stories which provide opportunities for children to experiment and be creative (Miranda, 2004:59). Inclusion of music in other arts areas act as a relaxation and enjoyment facility for ECD children thus promoting the quality of ECD programmes. Research suggests that parents do not use song hence teachers should make it an important teaching method in ECD education and care (Miranda, 2004:60). The current study sought to establish the parents' understanding of music and song as a teaching method in ECD.

According to Harper (2011:68), the use of songs and rhymes enhances listening skills. Listening is the first language mode that children acquire and it provides a foundation for all aspects of language and reading. Research reveals that there is a link between nursery rhyme knowledge of preschool children and their future success in reading, writing and spelling (Harper, 2011:69). Young (2003:50) reports that sensitivity to rhymes prior to a child's entry into formal school plays a causal role in their reading success and ability. Sensitivity to rhymes promotes auditory discrimination skills which are crucial for reading. An earlier longitudinal study by Miranda (2004:48) also gives evidence that nursery rhymes play a crucial role in children's phonological development. It can thus be concluded that the use of rhymes and songs in ECD leads to success in reading, spelling and building of sound awareness as well as children's linguistic and early literacy regardless of their social background. The current study aimed to find out whether ECD teachers in Harare primary schools were using songs and rhymes as the methodology of teaching.

2.4.3 The project method of teaching in ECD

The focus of education today is to provide students with the necessary skills to enable them to carry out an effective role when they begin their journey into the world of work (Rahman et al, 2012:110). The project based method of teaching gives a natural and rich learning environment which gives children an opportunity to explore their world and consequently develop reflective and meaningful learning. A study by Rahman et al. (2012:110) of Tunas Permata on the use of the project method of teaching in preschool showed that teachers lacked the confidence to implement the method effectively in ECD. The use of this method with ECD children is said to resonate with children who love to explore and investigate. It emphasises the social interaction in the learning process. Studies show that children actively use what they know to construct meaning through exploration, interpretation, criticising and creating (Miranda, 2004:47). The use of explorative learning enhances the ECD children's analytical skills. The current study sought to establish whether the ECD programmes provided ECD children with explorative and investigative skills.

The project based method of teaching and learning adopts a constructivist approach that focuses on the process of deep learning through the inquiry method (Rahman et al, 2012:113). In line with the Ecological theory the use of the inquiry method enhances creativeness in ECD children who are central to the ecology. It requires more than one class period and can be up to a month or longer and normally involves a group of children who are preoccupied with questions that are rich, alive and relevant to their daily lives thus providing stimulation for learning in a fun and interesting manner. According to Rotumoi and Too (2012:15), learning through the project method is seen as a process of inquiry and the teacher facilitates the learning process, listens, researches and learns together with the learners. According to Rahman et al. (2012:109), projects can be triggered from anything that can be researched and the subjects for research rely on children's interests. Relying on children's interests promotes the ECD children's enjoyment, learning and

development. Teachers can suggest, but children are given space to make their own choices. The project method captures children's interests and motivates them to be actively involved in the activities. It is flexible, provides meaningful learning experiences for children and is child-centred. The project method of teaching gives children the opportunity to explore issues in depth and integrates disciplines such as mathematics, science, art and language. The project method maybe time consuming and confusing to the ECD teachers if they are not well versed in it.

Ratumoi and Too (2012:6) state that the opportunity to interact with materials, peers and teachers helps children to develop self-esteem and social skills. The development of a positive self-esteem and social skills equips the ECD children to fit in society. Previous studies showed that the project method had a positive impact on teaching science, mathematics and literacy. For instance, a study by Rahman et al. (2012:107) showed that the project method of teaching can support the conceptual development of colour, alphabet, numbers, size, shape, texture, ratio, order, direction, time and social awareness. It is thus notable that the project method of teaching and learning has a positive impact on ECD learners' cognitive, social and emotional development. The current study sought to establish whether the project method had a positive impact on ECD children's holistic development.

The project method of teaching is a method that has long been recognised in terms of its benefits (Rahman et al, 2012). However, in terms of implementation, it is still far behind. By explaining proper planning, the project based method of teaching is a fun and educational activity that can help children develop as a whole. The current study sought to establish whether the Harare primary schools were teaching life skills education to ECD learners particularly through the project based teaching and learning method. Having looked at the methods of teaching ECD learners, the next section discusses personnel qualification in ECD.

2.5 PERSONNEL QUALIFICATION IN ECD

The ECD teacher has a highly responsible and demanding profession and hence the need for extensive training to equip the teacher to prepare ECD learners for a more structured learning (UNICEF, 2000:6; Govindasamy, 2010:24). The effective educator has extensive knowledge of how young children learn, the processes it involves and how human knowledge is structured (UNICEF, 2000:15). An effective teacher forms part of a positive microsystem (Ailwood, 2003). However, educators may lack knowledge of ECD children's developmental patterns, thus compromising the quality of ECD programmes.

Teacher education strongly predicts the quality of teaching to ECD children (Espinosa, 2002:8). A study in Britain by Walker (2008:10) of good ECD staff training as a quality indicator showed that children who had highly qualified teachers also had high educational and social outcomes whereas those whose teachers were para-professionals showed low educational and social outcomes. Teacher attitude also has an impact on the quality of service delivery in line with the Ecological theory. It is widely recognised that highly qualified personnel are an essential component of ECD programmes that result in improved quality of outcomes for young children (Pence, 2004:7; Myers, 2004:8; Ryan, Whitebook, Kipnis & Sakai, 2011:28). ECD children who are taught by teachers with specialised ECD training have been found to be more sociable, exhibit a developed use of language and perform at a higher level on cognitive tasks than children who are cared for by less qualified teachers (Ackerman & Barnett, 2009:334). Despite this, there is wide variation in state regulations needed to be an ECD teacher and this has resulted in a shortage of such specialised teachers (Ackerman & Barnett, 2009:335; Kamerman, 2006:34). The current study sought to establish the level of training of ECD teachers in Harare primary schools and how this affected the quality of education and care of ECD children.

While ECD teaching is a highly responsible profession, a study by Govindasamy (2010:24) concludes that there is not enough emphasis on the training and

qualification of ECD teachers. The study further concludes that the lack of concern over training and qualifications for what are, in reality, highly responsible roles, reflect the out-moded public attitudes which commonly regard the care of young children as an extension of the mothering role, assuming that it all comes naturally to women. Such attitudes, in turn, reinforce the low status accorded to ECD teaching which keeps salaries low and limits government resources accorded to the training of ECD teachers (Govindasamy, 2010:25). The appropriate training of ECD teachers influences the quality of ECD provision (UNICEF, 2000:8; Govindasamy, 2010:25; Myers, 2004:12). A study on ECD policies by Kathyanga (2011:62) of Malawi shows that while there is a minimum pre-requisite for becoming a caregiver, ECD teachers need training in order to deal with ECD learners. Training of ECD teachers who are instrumental to the holistic development of the child and are part of the microsystems enhances effective curriculum planning and implementation in keeping with the Ecological theory. The current study sought to establish whether the teacher qualification was accorded the necessary emphasis in ECD programmes.

Personnel that are qualified and trained will be in a position to provide quality education and care (Govindasamy, 2010:25). It is ultimately the role of the government to enforce policies and legislations that guarantee the quality of ECD education in relation to teacher qualification (Kathyanga, 2011:30). Govindasamy (2010:115) established that there are variations in teacher qualifications in South Africa and that those with low qualifications are studying to increase their knowledge of ECD children. In line with the Ecological theory, the variations of teachers' qualifications have an effect on their understanding of their roles and functions and this affects their professionalism and consequently the quality of ECD education and care. The current study sought to ascertain whether there was a common standard of personnel qualification in Harare primary schools in Zimbabwe and its effect on quality in ECD programmes. In the following sub-section, the role and function of the professional ECD teacher is discussed.

2.5.1 The role and function of the professional ECD teacher

A well trained ECD teacher is a professional who knows how to coordinate and deal with the ECD children and parents to promote the quality of education and care (Govindasamy, 2010:26). The word "professional" refers to the public recognition of the demands for a specific service which may only be provided by people that are skilled and formally educated (UNICEF, 2000:15). For example, Espinosa (2002:9) states that well trained ECD professional teachers in the US communicate respect for families and warmth for children and this in turn, affects the child's self-concept leading to quality education and care. In accordance with the Ecological theory the development of ECD children's self-concept enhances their learning and holistic development. A skilled teacher has goals intended to achieve specific outcomes, a standard of performance to adhere to and makes informed judgments that are applied effectively to improve the quality of ECD education and care (Govindasamy, 2010:26). A study in the US by Espinosa (2002:8) notes that teachers regularly assess children and this allows them to make adjustments as they plan activities that promote each individual child's development. In keeping with the Ecological theory, continual assessment of ECD children enhances the quality of teaching and learning in ECD programmes. The current study intended to ascertain whether the ECD teachers had the ability to assess ECD children.

As a professional, the ECD teacher supports the children's learning, thinks quickly, is assertive and identifies teaching opportunities (Govindasamy, 2010:26; UNICEF, 2000:15). Espinosa (2002:10) states that, US ECD teachers have frequent meaningful interactions with children and they engage them in meaningful conversation which helps expand their knowledge, vocabulary and improves their problem solving skills. The well trained ECD teacher also identifies the child's chances of excelling and possesses and applies specialised abilities to improve the learning environment (Kamerman, 2006:56). Contrary to this, a longitudinal study of European countries by Hyde and Kabiru (2003:56) concludes that these are lacking

in ECD teachers even though knowledge of children's learning underpins sound practice. The trained ECD teacher knows that her or his role in the ECD classroom is that of a facilitator, story-teller, nurse, programme planner, parent resource, adult educator and conflict manager (Gordon & Browne, 2006:172).

The qualified ECD teacher knows him or herself well and this self-knowledge enables the teacher to know his or her functions and thus be more supportive, positive and have stimulating interactions with children which are crucial (Espinosa, 2002:9; Govindasamy, 2010:28). Warm and nurturing interactions with children in accordance with the Ecological theory are linked to social competence and are essential for high quality ECD programmes. The teacher's teaching styles reflect an integration of the knowledge of systems and attitudes about others, personal interests, political values and preferences (Hyde & Kabiru, 2003:60). For example, the confident teacher who is nurturing may work well with shy and intimidated children. The professional teacher has a positive self-image and is thus not afraid to participate in children's activities which encourage children to explore and discover. This is a quality indicator to ECD education and care. Teachers are different when they listen with sensitivity and empathy, resulting in positive relationships with learners (Myers, 2004:9). The current study sought to establish whether the teacher training of ECD teachers in Zimbabwe equipped them with professionalism that was required for their job.

The ECD teacher's training enables him or her to manage the classroom (Govindasamy, 2010:30). Espinosa (2002:9) states that trained and professional ECD teachers have a deep understanding of the learning environment, teaching methods and curriculum allowing them to skillfully manage and promote children's social and cognitive development. The use of appropriate teaching methods and curriculum enhances the total development of ECD children in tandem with the Ecological theory which highlights that ECD children interact with the ecology to develop holistically.

Class management refers to the ability to create a learning environment appropriate for the whole class or other teaching arrangements that use incentives and imposed rules in which effective learning is given scope to flourish (UNICEF, 2000:12). Proper classroom management ensures that the environment is conducive to learning. A child-friendly environment enhances exploration and self-discovery learning among ECD children in line with the Ecological theory. The teacher finds a balance to accommodate all the learners. An evaluation of ECD teacher qualification by UNICEF (2006:60) of the new ECD children inclusion policy of Zimbabwe in the primary schools, highlighted that the quality of teacher education was poor hence they were not able to cope with the policy expectations and responsibilities expected of them. Kamerman (2006:26) refers to room management by a trained teacher as a contributory factor to a classroom climate which has a positive impact on the quality of ECD education and care. A warm climate in the classroom enhances the ECD children's intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to learn. An ECD trained professional intentionally creates an environment that supports peer interactions and nurtures relationships (Govindasamy, 2010:37). Similarly, Espinosa (2002:10) notes that, US ECD teachers who are highly qualified provide individualised and group responsive learning opportunities that promote quality education and care. In line with the Ecological theory, the level of qualification enables the teacher to tailor the curriculum to suit the learners' needs.

Gordon and Browne (2006:172) suggest that the ECD curriculum involves the process of translating theories of education into practice. A study by Ryan et al. (2011:10) of the professional skills required to support ECD children in curriculum related activities showed that highly qualified ECD teachers were very effective in their interaction with learners while the poorly qualified needed the support of the qualified to deal effectively with the learners. The study sought to establish whether the level of teacher qualification in ECD programmes had an impact on service delivery.

As members of the teaching profession, trained ECD teachers have professional requirements expected of them (Govindasamy, 2010:44). They are expected to study child development, family relations, parent education and curriculum planning (UNICEF, 2000:3). They are required to study throughout their career (career development). Continual career development enhances the ECD teachers' ability to deal with current issues affecting ECD children and thus promote their holistic development. Govindasamy (2010:47) noted that, teachers who seek professional development are highly motivated and achievement orientated. With meaning comes a personal feeling of purpose, coherence and commitment and this in turn, results in quality ECD education and care. Teacher education helps develop teaching methods and skills that take the understanding of how children learn into account (UNICEF, 2000:15). In contrast, when Ethiopian teachers were interviewed about the degree to which their teaching was child-centred and relevant to the students, they said that they linked their lessons to daily life at least once a week and sometimes not at all (Hyde & Kabiru, 2003:30). Not linking ECD children's learning to daily life compromises the quality of ECD programmes.

Professional teachers have evaluation and assessment skills which includes assessment of both performance and factual knowledge (UNICEF, 2000:16). Assessment of ECD children's performance and factual knowledge allows the teachers to gauge individual student learning and adopt learning activities with student needs in mind in line with the Ecological theory. Observations in Guinea and India found out that, ECD teachers were poorly trained in evaluation techniques and that the reality was far from continuous evaluation procedures recommended by official programmes (UNICEF, 2000:16). The current study sought to ascertain whether ECD teachers were fully trained to teach ECD children and to carry out assessments. The next section discusses the resources required in ECD and their effect on the quality of ECD education.

2.6 RESOURCES AVAILBILITY IN ECD

This section presents the resources required by ECD centres as demonstrated by the literature. The resources include financial, material and human resources.

2.6.1 Financial resources in ECD

Existing sources of data of ECD programmes suggest large differences in per student costs (Hyde & Kabiru, 2003). This data is subject to serious challenges regarding its accuracy and comparability because it is not based upon a common definition of services or a common accounting system. In New Jersey, for example, state spending does not capture the full costs of preschool which are compiled from a variety of sources ranging from federal, state local allocations and private sources such as parents' fees or in kind (Levin & Schwartz, 2007:10). Due to the absence of adequate data, it is difficult to discern whether funding differences reflect differences in service delivery or quality or whether fees vary in some way which is measurable. Presumably, ECD centres for which funding is very high have the strictest requirements for quality but a study by Levin and Schwartz (2007:13) established that there is very little information available between funding and quality or the contributions that specific cost elements have to specific preschool outcomes. In tandem with the Ecological theory, highly funded ECD programmes enhance resources' availability and consequently the quality of ECD programmes.

Kenny (1997:148) states that well funded ECD programmes are of high quality in that programmes have high positive social, intellectual, emotional and physical outcomes for ECD children. A study by Rotumoi and Too (2012:6) on the effectiveness of Virginian preschool initiative funded programmes for at-risk four year olds concluded that ECD children had high literacy outcomes. However, Hyde and Kabiru (2003:34) argue that funding of ECD programmes is inadequate and this is one of the major constraints limiting the quality of ECD programmes. Inadequate funding limits resource availability and consequently compromises the quality of ECD

programmes. For example, for the majority of African countries, the allocation of financial resources for ECD children is very low and the learning outcomes are rather low (Myers, 2004:7; Hyde & Kabiru, 2003:32).

Specifying quality in terms of inputs or programme design is not straight forward so one approach is to assume that high quality is associated with adequate funding per child which means that, where the per-child funding is high, the quality of education and development is also assumed to be high (Belfield, 2006:10). Such financial resources address the all round concerns of ECD children foundational to their holistic development in keeping with the Ecological theory which suggests that the economic climate influences the child's development patterns. Measuring overall commitment to ECD requires a multifaceted approach because in some countries, ECD learning maybe heavily market oriented and in others, it is a state responsibility (Excell & Linington, 2011:9). A multifaceted approach to financial resource allocation embraces ECD children from different socio-economic backgrounds thus promoting the accessibility of quality ECD programmes. Countries define ECD differently and hence the level of financial commitment to ECD education is different. The current study sought to establish the level of financial commitment demonstrated by the primary schools towards ECD programmes.

Essentially there are two sources of funding for ECD education and these are public and private funding (Kamerman, 2000:20; Belfield, 2006:8). Public funding can be a major source of funding for families who cannot afford to make large private contributions for their ECD children (Belfield, 2006). Public funding shows commitment of the countries to ECD children's learning and development and thus enhancing the quality of ECD programmes in accordance with the Ecological theory which highlights that the government's role in ECD influences the child's holistic development. Regarding public funds, national governments may have more political strength to collect revenue and regional governments may be relied upon to organise delivery of programmes accommodating local conditions. Private funds for ECD children are incurred expenditures by households on the education of their

children and other private sources available to fund ECD programmes may include donations from churches, charities and companies (Pence, 2004:15; Belfield, 2006:10). For some, family incomes maybe the only way for families to choose different types of ECD education (Kamerman, 2000:10; Belfield, 2006:13). Funding of ECD programmes in Zimbabwe for example, is mainly the parents' responsibility and failure of the parents to meet expected financial standards impact negatively on the quality of ECD education and care (Nziramasanga, 1999:30). The current study intended to establish whether ECD programmes in Zimbabwe were well funded and the impact of funding on the quality of ECD education and care.

2.6.1.1 Determinants of funding in ECD

Levin and Schwartz (2007:13) state that one reason why ECD costs are not understood is because preschool education and care is far from homogenous. The extent of provision of ECD education and care determines the costs. For example, there are differences between the costs of a 3 or 4 hour session and a 12 hour session. Funding from enrollments can also determine the extent of ECD provisions (Levin & Schwartz, 2007:14) and this depends on the demographic concentration of eligible children. Accessibility is also another determinant of funding. Unless ECD centres are placed conveniently in every neighbourhood, there may be difficulties of access and this, in turn, affects enrollment and consequently financial resources (Hyde & Kabiru, 2003:35).

The quality of services also affects financial resources in an ECD centre (Levin & Schwartz, 2007:10). A key determining feature of costs is the ratio of adult personnel to children which is a valuable quality indicator. It is presumed that, where there are more personnel, there are more services provided and more attentive care is given to children (Myers, 2004:8). With low ratios of personnel to children, ECD services become limited (Kamerman, 2006:15). This is consistent with Levin and Schwartz's (2007:15) findings who conclude that, with more personnel, it is possible to increase the quality of ECD education and care services. In this regard, a study in the US found that programmes that were of acceptable quality cost only 10% more

than poorer programmes (Hyde & Kabiru, 2003:38). In line with the Ecological theory acceptable quality funding and teacher to pupil ratio of ECD programmes enhances ECD children's learning and development. The current study intended to establish the quality of funding and teacher to pupil ratio and its impact on the quality of ECD programmes.

Presumably, ECD specialists have superior teaching ability hence they make a larger educational contribution (Levin & Schwartz, 2007:15). The higher the qualifications, the higher the salaries will be and also the capability of the staffs. This superior qualification will have a profound effect on the overall funding of ECD education and care. The number of personnel involved in children's education and care will have a bearing on the funding of ECD programmes. Services offered such as, for example, health services and parent training will influence the financial resources in the ECD centre (Hyde & Kabiru, 2003:39). Funding may also vary according to geographical regions in response to the relative supply and demand for persons with appropriate skills and credentials. In keeping with the Ecological theory, qualification may not always match the salary while competence and efficiency maybe influenced by the teachers' attitudes. The current study intended to ascertain whether teachers and their assistants were well remunerated from all the suburbs considering that they were from different geographical areas.

Costs in ECD are also influenced by the characteristics of facilities and their sizes (Levin & Schwartz, 2007:15). Safety requirements, square footage and classroom amenities all affect the funding of ECD programmes. According to Hyde and Kabiru (2003:39), rooms are designed for play, rest, teaching, food preparation, counselling and special needs. In addition, bathrooms are child-sized and thus the maintenance of facilities can vary considerably and therefore they affect costs. On the other hand, auxiliary services like health, nutrition and parent services also determine the financial resources in an ECD centre. According to UNICEF (2000:10), the inclusion of health or nutrition services increases the costs in a centre. The study sought to determine the availability of financial resources in the Zimbabwean primary schools

and the effect thereof on the standards required for the ECD learners' facilities. In the following sub-section literature on material resources in ECD is presented.

2.6.2 Material resources in ECD

The field of ECD continues expanding, experiencing a new phase of educationally oriented growth and yet the field remains fragmented and insufficiently materially resourced and this, in turn, affects the quality of ECD education and care negatively (Sussman & Gillman, 2007:62). Well designed facilities, for example, enhance child development, programme quality and workforce satisfaction in line with the Ecological theory. However, Hyde and Kabiru (2003:37) suggest that the physical environment, which includes the material resources, is rarely measured, even though it is equally as important as teacher qualifications and financial resources. Although research studies in ECD have neglected the physical environment and material resources critical contributors to the quality of ECD education, there is evidence to support this proposition (Sussman & Gillman, 2007:63). For example, the environmental psychology has demonstrated that the physical environment and the material resources strongly correlate with student achievement and teacher retention (Kwela, Binagi & Kainamula, 2000:50). The availability of adequate and age-appropriate furniture and proper resting places is a pre-requisite to quality ECD education and care. In contrast, a study by Gunhu et al. (2011:140) concludes that the quality of ECD education and care in Masvingo, Zimbabwe, was affected as children were exposed to soil-related infections because of the unavailability of adequate and age-appropriate furniture and proper resting places.

The resources directed towards an expansion of state funded ECD programmes provide an opportunity to ensure quality in ECD programmes (Hyde & Kabiru, 2003:35). In keeping with the Ecological theory, to do so requires a strong commitment to building the infrastructure necessary to support levels of quality. Kwela et al. (2000:49) argue that buildings, toilets and playground equipment were lacking in the ECD centres in Malawi. As a result, the safety of the learners was

jeopardised in this environment as there was a lack of clean water sources and appropriate material resources.

The material resources needed to support ECD education and care have three fundamental roles which are: establishing and enforcing the ECD programme and child outcome standards, creating and sustaining a system to support elements of quality and ensuring quality through mechanisms for accountability and continuous quality improvement (Azzi-Lessing, 2009:10). However, while countries have made strides in establishing programme quality standards and to a lesser extent, enforcing those standards, as well as increasing professional development, opportunities, progress in building infrastructure and acquiring material resources remain largely unaddressed (Bauer, 2010:84). In accordance with the Ecological theory progress in building infrastructure and acquiring material resources enhances the ECD children's learning and development. To ensure quality across the spectrum of ECD programmes, structures and material resources must be put in place to fulfill these roles and provide effective coordination of all quality support activities. Ciumwari (2010:9) notes that school heads in Kenya do not buy the required material resources due to lack of expert knowledge of ECD children's learning requirements. The current study sought to establish whether the material resources in ECD were well provided for in ECD programmes.

The availability of material resources contributes towards the quality of ECD learning environments (Kamerman, 2006:16). Availability of material resources is likely to result in children's concerns being addressed in totality. A study done by Ackerman and Barnett (2009:330), of Head Start programmes in Colorado, on the impact of ECD programmes whose quality was defined in terms of standards of material resources offered to those from poor backgrounds, concluded that children who had good material resources gained in cognitive and language development. To be deemed of quality, the material resources must promote appropriate physical, social, emotional and intellectual development (Barnett, 2004:23). Children use sand, water or play dough in a variety of ways depending on their maturity, ability, interest and

involvement (Myers, 2004:10). To fully promote quality ECD education and care, the toilets, sinks, mirrors, tables and chairs are child-sized. In general, research concluded that ECD programmes with lasting effects on children are the most educationally intensive and expensive and hence have all the required material resources (Huntsman, 2008:15). Such quality material resources address the cognitive, physical, social and emotional concerns of children hence foundational to their holistic development in line with the Ecological theory.

A study in India by Ryan et al. (2011:15) on the adequacy and suitability of material resources and infrastructure stated that, some schools stored gas in the classrooms endangering the children's lives through possible leakages of gas. Such poor and unsuitable storage facilities endanger the health and safety of ECD children and consequently compromise the quality of ECD programmes.

According to Bauer (2010:88), material resources should provide stimulation to encourage development of physical, cognitive, emotional and social skills. In addition, the material resources must be developmentally appropriate and should provide for concrete hands-on activities. Material resources should also offer change and variety. Furthermore, the materials given should be flexible and these include beads, paints and brushes, lego, scissors, puzzles, balls, skittles and ropes. Material resources should be multi-purpose to enhance the quality of play and learning (Currie, 2001:225). According to Ciumwari (2010:90), material resources can be simple, complex or super complex. Complex and super complex material resources have essentially more than one function. The current study sought to establish whether the material resources provided in ECD programmes offered change and variety.

ECD materials support basic functions and learning activities. Story books and picture books impart declarative knowledge and skills required to be successful in the primary schools (Bauer, 2010:82). In line with the Ecological theory, the use of stories and pictures enhances comprehensive skills in ECD children. Ciumwari (2010:9) argues that teaching materials were not available in Malawi and thus

learning was done rather by saying than by doing. The unavailability of material resources compromises the quality of ECD programmes.

Kwela et al. (2000:49) established that ECD teachers in Tanzania had no syllabus which is an important resource in professional teaching. In the same study, teachers are noted to have improvised their syllabi and their teaching and learning materials. The current study sought to ascertain whether Zimbabwean primary schools had syllabi which were a quality indicator of ECD programmes. In the following sub-section, literature on human resources in ECD is presented.

2.6.3 Human resources in ECD

Human resources, according to Huntsman (2008:4), are the people who make up the ECD centre and these include the child educators, care providers, centre directors and policy makers. In all these categories, leadership, innovation, creativity and a strong knowledge base are foundational. Human resources in ECD are highly skilled (Hyde & Kabiru, 2003:35) and it is fundamental that high quality ECD programmes have ECD practitioners who are well educated in ECD education, skilled, competent, well respected and well remunerated. Highly educated human resources impart knowledge and skills effectively to ECD children.

In Canada and the US, studies indicate that there is an association between the quality of care and the remuneration, working conditions and job satisfaction (Azzi-Lessing, 2009:12). Good motivation of ECD teachers enhances quality teaching of ECD children, consequently promoting their holistic development. In addition, strong pedagogical leadership and competent human resources management at the ECD centre is important for supporting nurturing and developing the staff team and the reflexive qualities known to improve quality. Korjenevitch and Dunifon (2010:13) suggest that interactions between staff and children and the environment created by staff contribute to positive ECD children's well-being. The study sought to establish

the quality of interactions between staff and children and its impact on the quality of ECD programmes.

Huntsman (2008:4) points out that, ECD practitioners have positive dispositions and this includes characteristics such as enthusiasm and good attitude. They are called to be effective communicators, adaptable to change, life-long learners, competent and accepting to others. A study by Barnett (2004:3) concludes that human resources in ECD must be enthusiastic. They must go beyond the physical and financial challenges and must be dedicated advocates of ECD children's welfare. However, despite the important role that ECD teachers and caregivers play, research has shown that ECD teachers are undervalued (Huntsman, 2008:30). ECD practitioners may not be in a good disposition or accorded their due professional value in line with the Ecological theory which purports that ECD teachers are part of the microsystems which lead to the total development of the ECD child. The study sought to establish whether the ECD teachers were accorded the professional value they deserved.

Human resources are a fundamental quality indicator in ECD centres (Ho, 2009:220). Human resources play an important role in developing resource mobilisation of the organisation in order to meet its objectives for future development. Good resource mobilisation enhances the learning and development of ECD programmes. However, while the resources are important, they are often limited. Human resources shortages may lead to poor supervision and teaching of ECD children thus compromising the quality of ECD programmes. Curie (2001:224) found that child care facilities with good quality structures as measured by safer, cleaner and more stimulating environments, lower child-staff ratios in terms of classroom process and caregivers who were sensitive to the children, provided a more cognitively stimulating environment. Furthermore, children under the care of highly qualified human resources have fewer developmental problems (Kenny, 1997:125; Curie, 2001:222). Teacher qualification may not always mean reaping fewer developmental

problems as some trained teachers lack competency in instilling discipline to ECD children.

Probably the most important aspect of quality for an ECD programme is the nature of the interaction between the teacher and the child (Hyde & Kabiru, 2003:15). Good interaction between the teacher and the children enhances learning and development of ECD children. In general, deductive teaching methods and punitive teaching strategies of dealing with ECD children are associated with less favourable teaching outcomes (Curie, 2001:225). The study sought to establish the role and quality of human resources in ECD programmes in Zimbabwean primary schools.

High quality programmes for children contribute to good working environments for staff which help to attract and retain a qualified workforce (Korjenevitch & Dunifon, 2010:15). A supportive school environment enables the teacher and the ECD children to be creative, thus enhancing the quality of ECD programmes. Human resources in ECD should be qualified, diverse, of mixed genders and their careers should be satisfying, respectable and financially viable. In this regard, minimal staff turnover is a strong quality indicator (Huntsman, 2008:28). However, high staff turnover compromises the ECD children's feelings of security in line with the Ecological theory.

Research suggests that children should be cared for by the same human resources for at least one year. In support of this view, Korjenevitch and Dunifon (2010:12) suggest that, increased behavioural problems among children in child care maybe due to lack of staff stability. Furthermore, high staff turnover is consistently positively related to outcomes across studies of child care (Huntsman, 2008:30). High staff turnover disrupts the development of the ECD children's trust level. This is often linked with low wage levels for workers in child care. Currie (2001:225) quotes figures indicating a decline in the educational background and training of child care staff and suggests that this may be related to low wages. The current study sought to ascertain whether ECD teachers are well remunerated and its effect on staff

turnover and consequently the quality of ECD programmes in Harare primary schools.

Ndani and Kimani (2010:40) note that it is important that human resources in ECD centres are well motivated through their working conditions. In accordance with the Ecological theory, heavy workloads and low irregular salaries, unclear terms and poor conditions often de-motivate practitioners. The current study aimed at assessing how well motivated the ECD teachers were in Harare primary schools and the effect thereof on the quality of ECD programmes.

A study by Ndani and Kimani (2010:43) highlights that high pupil enrollment figures contribute towards ECD teacher attrition and consequently affect the quality of education and care negatively. A well staffed ECD programme ensures thorough supervision of toilet cleaning, hand-washing, and all learning and play activities, thus boosting staff motivation. Contrary to this, a study by UNICEF (2000:12) highlighted that understaffing in ECD affected the supervision of learning and play activities, hand-washing supervision, toilet training and toilet cleaning supervision and resultantly affected quality education and care as well as the job satisfaction of teachers. In addition, Kenyan studies have shown that most centres lack facilities and equipment and materials that would motivate teachers and would develop children holistically. Public centres supported unfriendly work conditions for ECD teachers, characterised by windowless, rough mud wall and floored classrooms. In such classes, ventilation was inadequate, dust was a problem, children were easily distracted and teachers were de-motivated (Ciumwari, 2010:30). In contrast, Ndani and Kimani (2010:40) show that the availability of equipment contributes towards human resources motivation. In the same study, staff felt motivated by the fringe benefits, for example, getting snacks from the feeding programmes in the ECD centres. The current study intended to determine whether the human resources in Harare primary schools in Zimbabwe were well motivated by their working conditions.

2.7   CONCLUSION

The present chapter presented the review of related literature. The sub-headings under which the literature was reviewed include: the organisation and management of ECD programmes, components of the ECD programmes, which include policy and legislature in ECD education, guidance and counselling, nutrition, health and safety in ECD and parental involvement in ECD. The literature that was further reviewed included teaching methods in ECD, personnel qualifications in ECD and, finally, the availability of resources in the running and administration of ECD centres. In the next chapter, the research methodology is discussed.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The study aimed at establishing the quality of ECD programmes in Harare primary schools in Zimbabwe. This chapter describes and justifies the methods used to conduct the study. The chapter covers the design used in the study, the sample and the sampling procedure. The different data collection instruments used and the rationale for using them are also discussed. Data collection procedures, analysis and research ethics are also presented in this chapter.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design is an overall strategy that one chooses in a proper and systematic manner to carry out a research study (Creswell, 2009:3). Terell (2012:258) describes a research design as a road map that determines the most appropriate route to take when carrying out the study. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005:10), a design is a summary of procedures that researchers use to collect, analyse, interpret and present their research data. Research designs guide the methods and decisions that researchers make during their studies and set the logic which they use to interpret their findings (Flick, 2002:220). A research design also stipulates from whom, when, and how data is collected (Patton, 2002:225). Creswell (2006:9) also notes that a research design plans the procurement of resources at the right time. In this study, a qualitative design with some quantification was used. The qualitative design will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

3.2.1 The qualitative design

In qualitative research, a phenomenon is viewed in its entirety or holistically. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005:9), investigators should not impose their

assumptions, limitations or delimitations and accept that reality exists as the respondent sees it. The present study intended to capture the participants' views and understanding of quality ECD programmes and not the researcher's assumptions. Terell (2012:277) notes that, in qualitative research, the researcher records fully, accurately and in an unbiased way what s/he sees and hears from the respondents. Denzin and Lincoln (2005:10) note that qualitative studies emphasise the natural settings, entities and processes that are not experimentally examined or measured in terms of quantity, amount or intensity. Since this study sought to observe the entities of teaching and learning processes in the natural settings of the ECD learning environment and describe the quality or lack thereof in ECD programmes in Harare primary schools, qualitative research was thus deemed suitable for this study.

Patton (2002:225) states that in qualitative research, direct quotations and excerpts from interviews can be cited as they present the participants' perceptions. In the present study, verbal quotes from ECD teachers and administrators were relevant as they captured the participants' perceptions of quality ECD programmes. As qualitative research is the interpretive study of a specified phenomenon or problem, the researcher becomes central to the analysis of data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005:7). The qualitative approach is naturalistic in nature and takes the geographical, physical, historical and cultural contexts into consideration (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:20). Creswell (2009:175) agrees that qualitative researchers tend to collect data in the field at the site where participants experience the issue or problem under study. The present study focused on the quality of ECD programmes from the geographical, historical and cultural context of the primary schools and therefore the qualitative methodology was suitable.

Qualitative researchers are key instruments as they collect data themselves through interviews and observing behaviour (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005:10; Wiersma & Jurs, 2009:232). This view is supported by Creswell (2006:9) who notes that qualitative researchers use multiple sources of data and thus do not rely on a single data

source. In this study, the researcher observed the ECD teachers, teaching and playing with their ECD learners and also interviewed the administrators, parents and teachers involved in ECD programmes to establish the quality of ECD programmes.

Creswell (2009:176) says that, in qualitative data collection, the researcher builds patterns, categories and themes from the bottom up, by organising data into increasingly abstract units of information. The author adds that participants may be collaborated to shape the themes or abstractions that emerge from the process. The study moved from asking general questions by engaging a few participants whose verbal and visual data was arranged coherently to portray the situation they experienced regarding the administration and running of ECD programmes.

However, qualitative research has its own weaknesses which include the bias created by the personal interpretations of the researcher (Patton, 2002:226). The disadvantage of subjectivity is that results are dependent upon the researcher's interpretations and descriptions. To counter the weakness of biases, the researcher tried to be as objective as possible in interpreting the data collected.

When qualitative methods of collecting data are used, the data collected can be inaccurate because respondents are often untruthful or biased (Creswell, 2009:177). The researcher tried to create a warm environment during observations and interviews so as to build trust with respondents. Where necessary, probing was done to counter the weakness of perceived untruthfulness.

McMillan and Schumacher (2010:20) also suggest that results may be influenced by many other factors that researchers did not consider or even know about. Creswell (2006:9) also notes that, due to this, the replication of results may be difficult. The next section discusses the sample and sampling procedures.

3.3 SAMPLE AND SAMPLING PROCEDURE

A sample is a representative selected for a study whose characteristics exemplify the larger group from which it was selected (Patton, 2002:408; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005:370). A purposive sample of 30 participants was chosen from 10 Harare primary schools used in this study. It included 10 school heads or teachers in charge, 10 school development committee members and 10 ECD teachers. McMillan and Schumacher (2010:138) define purposive sampling as an approach whereby participants are selected because of the rich information they hold that is required to answer the research questions. In support, Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2007:115) suggest that, in purposive sampling, researchers handpick the cases to be included in the study on the basis of their typicality or possession of particular characteristics being sought. In the current study the participants were the school heads, SDC members who represented the ECD children's parents and the ECD teachers of four to five year olds of the purposively sampled primary schools with ECD programmes.

Sampling is the process of selecting a number of individuals, groups or settings for a study in such a way that the individuals represent the larger group from which they were selected such that it maximises the researcher's ability to answer his or her questions (Patton, 2002:45; Creswell, Ebersohn, Eloff, Ferreira, Ivankova, Janson, Neuwenhuis, Pieterson, Plano-Clark & Van der Westhuizen, 2010:79). Sampling is done to gather data about the population in order to make an inference that can be generalised to the population. In purposive sampling, the researcher chooses respondents that represent the topic of interest, on the basis of his or her knowledge of the population and a judgment is made as to which participants should be selected (Patton, 2002:222). The participants were selected purposively by virtue of them being in schools that offer ECD programmes. McMillan and Schumacher (2010:378) suggest that purposeful samples can be stratified or nested by selecting particular units or cases that vary according to a key dimension. The researcher used purposive sampling to identify primary schools, administrators, ECD teachers of four to five year olds and parents with ECD learners in Harare primary schools. The ECD

parents were purposively sampled by virtue of them being SDC members representing the ECD parents. Through purposive sampling, the researcher sought to identify the phenomena in the ECD learning environment where quality or lack thereof was likely to occur. This idea is supported by Denzin and Lincoln (2000:370) who contend that purposive sampling is a qualitative sampling procedure that seeks out groups and settings being studied and where activity is likely to occur.

The researcher chose Harare schools because of easy accessibility. These schools had ECD programmes in contrast with schools that did not implement the policy of four to five year-olds' inclusion in the primary schools. For the purposes of this study, the researcher purposely sampled 10 schools from all suburbs in Harare which included the former Group A (former schools for white children), former Group B schools (former schools for black children) and schools from newly-built suburbs. This selection was not for comparative purposes but to establish the quality of ECD learners' educational facilities, curriculum and programmes from different geographical and socialisation angles. From each school, one ECD teacher of four to five year olds was interviewed and observed teaching. The school head or TIC formed part of the participants as administrators of ECD programmes. Instrumentation will be discussed next.

3.4 INSTRUMENTATION

Observations and in-depth interviews were used to collect data for the purposes of responding to the critical questions asked earlier in the discussion.

3.4.1 Observations

The researcher observed ECD teachers and their learners as well as the learning environment. The observation was done with the aid of observation checklists focusing on the ECD children's learning and developmental characteristics (see appendix A). Observation is often successfully used to describe what is happening in

a context and why it is happening (Silverman, 2004:181). In this case, the context was the ECD learning environment, particularly the play areas and activities. This enabled the researcher to look at how the ECD curriculum operates *in situ.* This was necessary as Tedlock (2005:468) suggests that there are limitations to what can be learned from verbal communications. The observations that took place led to follow-up in-depth interviews for triangulation purposes.

To fully understand the complexities of ECD programmes from the learners' perspective and from the perspective of the teachers, direct participation and observation of their interactions was the best data collecting method. This enabled the staff and children to operate without being conscious of being under observation. Not participating at other times minimised subjectivity and thus authenticated the research. This method of data collection is in agreement with Tedlock (2005:468) who expresses the view that the most complete form of sociological data is that which the participant observer gathers. It also enabled the researcher to record her observations with the aid of an observation checklist (Wiersma & Jurs, 2009:232). Being an ECD specialist the researcher embarked on observation checklist formulation aware that ECD programmes have activity areas and timetables that are quality indicators. The researcher filled in checklists on learner development characteristics including: content, learning processes and the learning environment. The researcher captured the interactions between ECD children and their teachers for half a day, and once a week for four months. The activities taking place in the ECD classroom and environment were documented as checklists. Taking into cognisance the Hawthorne effect, the researcher was objective in her observations and interpretation of findings. Conscious of her long experience in ECD, the researcher was objective during observation and interpretation of findings. The observation was meant to help the researcher to reflect on the quality of activities being offered. These observation checklists results were compared with interview notes. The following section looks at in-depth interviews.

3.4.2 In-depth interviews

According to Gay, Mills and Airasian (2011:386), an interview is a purposeful interaction in which one person obtains information from another. In-depth interviews permit researchers to obtain important data that they cannot acquire from observation alone (Silverman, 2004:181). In this study, interviews were follow-ups to the observations that the researcher made of ECD programmes and for triangulation purposes. Wiersma and Jurs (2009) note that interviews provide information that is inaccessible from observation. In this study, the researcher selected to use interviews because they enabled her to get face-to-face dialogue. For example, when she asked participants to describe to her how they were teaching their ECD children, she was able to tell whether they enjoyed their work and were convinced of their teaching approaches.

Patton (2002:129) posits that, through individual interviews of purposively sampled participants, we can get participants' mental transformations. In the current study, ECD parents were sampled, one per school, from the ten schools under study. The ECD parents were represented by an SDC member parent with an ECD child in the school. The interview guide for parents intended to establish parental attitudes, involvement and their general feelings and observations towards the quality of ECD programmes at their respective schools (see appendix D). An interview guide for school heads was also created for school heads of the respective schools to establish how they were coping with the inclusion of ECD children in primary schools, how they felt about their level of competence and that of their ECD teachers and the effect of the ECD programme on the administration and running of the schools (see appendix B). Another interview guide was created for ECD teachers to establish how they were teaching ECD children (see appendix C).The researcher also gave the interviewees a chance to speak their minds and to dwell on those aspects they found significant. Each participant was interviewed for one hour. The school heads' interviews were carried out mid-morning following the observation of ECD programmes while parents were interviewed whenever they fetched the ECD

children. The ECD teachers were interviewed after dismissing the ECD children. The researcher had a one on one interview after discussing the informed consent issues with the participants (see appendix I) while a voice recorder captured the data. The recorded interviews and later on the transcribed notes were stored in a locked cabinet in the researcher's office where nobody had access to them.

Interviews had the advantage that the researcher explored and probed participants' responses to in-depth data about their experiences and feelings about the quality of ECD programmes. Gay et al. (2011:388) note that, through interviews, one can examine attitudes, interests, feelings, concerns and values that may not be obvious through observations. However, interviews in the study had the disadvantage of being time consuming. Next, validity and reliability is discussed.

3.4.3 Validity and Reliability

Patton (2002:140) and Christians (2005:148) define validity as a demonstration that the evidence for the results reported is sound and when the argument made based on the results is strong. Validity is a requirement for quantitative research and lack of validity renders the study worthless. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005:10), validity maybe addressed through honesty, depth, participants approached, the extent of triangulation and the objectivity of the researcher. In the current study, validity   was assured by credibility: having an adequate engagement in the research setting so that recurrent patterns in data could be properly identified and verified. It was also insured through accurate capturing by mechanically recording observations as well as informal conversations.

To ensure that errors of any nature in the data gathering instrument are up to standard before distributing instruments, a pilot study was conducted to check on validity and reliability. Creswell et al. (2010) suggest that in all cases, it is essential that newly constructed instruments in their semi final form be tested before administration in the main study. Validity and reliability was also ensured through

careful sampling, and appropriate instrumentation. In this study observations and interviews were compared to provide evidence of validity and reliability.

3.4.4 Trustworthiness

The aim of trustworthiness in a qualitative inquiry is to support the argument that the inquiry's findings are "worth paying attention to" (Attride-Stirling, 2001:10). In the current study trustworthiness was assured through credibility which is an evaluation of whether or not the research findings represent a "credible, transferable, dependable and confirmable" conceptual interpretation of the data drawn from the participants' original data. Transferability is the degree to which the findings of this inquiry can apply or transfer beyond the bounds of the study (Anderson, 2004:310). Dependability is an assessment of the quality of the integrated processes of data collection, data analysis, and theory generation (Thomas & Harden, 2008:15). Conformability is a measure of how well the inquiry's findings are supported by the data collected (Anderson, 2007: 2).

To address credibility, the researcher employed two research instruments for triangulation purposes and thus complemented the weaknesses of one instrument with another. Member Checking was also done to ensure trustworthiness of the study (Denzin &Lincoln. 2005:80). This was done as soon as all recorded data had been transcribed and analysed but before it was in its final form to allow for corrections. In the process of member checking, each of the research participants reviewed a summary of the results of inquiry.

3.4.5 Pilot study

The researcher aimed at reducing ambiguities as far as possible by conducting a pilot study. According to Silverman (2006), a pilot study is a smaller version of a larger study that is conducted to prepare for that study. It involved pre-testing a research tool and, in this case, the observation checklists and the interview items. Creswell (2009:178) notes that a pilot study is also used as a feasibility study to ensure that ideas or methods behind research are sound. It is a pre-study of a

miniature version of the main study with only a few participants. In line with a recommendation by Spratt, Walker and Robinson (2004:10), the items are tried with a smaller sample similar to potential participants. Although the group used for the pilot study need not be a random sample of the prospective participants, it still needs to be knowledgeable of the variables under study so that they are able to make value judgments.

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2006:195), a pilot study helps the researcher to work out some of the procedural bugs. In other words, the pilot study reduces the number of unanticipated problems because the researcher has the opportunity to redesign parts of the study to overcome difficulties that the miniature study reveals. In support of McMillan and Schumacher, Creswell (2006:9) notes that the pilot study provides the researcher with the opportunity to discover ideas, approaches and clues that he or she may not foresee before conducting the pilot study. Such ideas and clues, according to Creswell (2006:10), increase the chances of getting findings close to the requirements of the main study. Pilot studies permit a thorough check of analytical procedures giving the researcher a chance to evaluate the usefulness of the data. This enables the researcher to make alterations in the data collecting process so that the data in the main study can be analysed more efficiently (Spratt et al, 2004:12).

An administrator, an ECD teacher and a parent from one school were sampled to participate in the pilot study. The pilot study helped to check the clarity of items, instructions and layout, gain validity of the interview items and eliminate ambiguities in wording (Spratt et al, 2012:261). Permission to carry out the study was sought for from the Ministry of Education's head office.

All the observations and interviews in the pilot study were carried out by the researcher and the respondents were given an opportunity to comment on the research instruments. These comments were considered when making modifications before presenting the interview items in the main study. The instruments were

finalised and produced. Examples of changed interview questions that were not understood are as follows: to the school heads: "To what extent is central coordination and collaboration of ECD programmes helpful?" was changed to "To what extent is the lead ministry helpful in collaborating ECD programmes?", to the parents: "To what extent does your ECD teacher show professionalism when dealing with your ECD children?", was changed to a simple question: "What is your ECD teacher's qualification?", and a follow up question was added: "What is the impact of your ECD teacher's qualification on service delivery?"The next section presents the data collection procedure.

3.5 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

Permission to undertake the study was sought from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education's head office by submitting a letter in person to the Education Ministry and, from there, the researcher took the letter of approval to the Provincial Director of Harare schools. Lastly, the letters from the head office and the director of Harare schools were taken to the schools concerned where the researcher handed them to the school heads. The researcher also handed the school heads a letter requesting to carry out research in their schools (see appendix H). The researcher personally visited the schools in each suburb to make observations using checklists and conducted in-depth interviews. Before making observations and interviewing the participants informed consent issues were discussed (see appendix I). In the next section the data analysis is presented.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS

Analysing data from observations and interviews started with segmenting findings according to sub-research questions. The researcher tried to link related issues from observations and interviews. In doing this, she compiled a list of data per the sub-research questions. As she identified different items, she looked for similarities and differences between and among them. The researcher transcribed and studied the recorded interviews so as to establish whether the ECD quality education was being

offered in Harare primary schools to ECD learners. The data from observations was analysed as percentages and presented in tables while in-depth interview excerpts were quoted verbatim. The ethical issues are discussed next.

3.7 ETHICAL ISSUES

The following ethical issues are addressed in the next section:

3.7.1 Permission

Permission to carry out a study makes the research authentic and makes it possible to conduct it (Christians, 2005:144). The researcher took her letter seeking permission to carry out this study to the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education's head office in person. The letter granting her permission to carry out the study from the head office and her own letter seeking permission was taken to the Provincial Education Director of Harare schools. The researcher personally took the letters of permission granted from the Head Office and the Provincial Education Director's office to the District offices seeking permission to carry out the study. The researcher then took all the letters of permission to the schools personally seeking an audience first with the school head of each school under study whom she handed a letter directed to him/her requesting permission to use his/her school in the study.

3.7.2 Informed consent

Patton (2002:273) talks of informed consent as a process whereby participants give their consent to participate in a research study after getting honest information about its procedures, risks and benefits. To ensure this, the researcher informed her respondents about the purpose of the study as well as making them aware of the risks they may face in participating in the study. The researcher also made sure that the participants were free to make decisions about whether they wanted to participate or not at any point in the study. In other words, they needed to have

informed consent (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:333). The researcher made the participants aware that they were free to withdraw at any point in the study.

3.7.3 Confidentiality

Patton (2002:412) contends that confidentiality means that no one has access to the participants' data or names in the possession of the researcher and that no one can match research information with that of a participant. Confidentiality of the participants was also taken into consideration by making sure that they remained anonymous. Names were not used for the schools, the parents, the teachers and the school heads.

3.7.4 Anonymity

A participant of a study has a right to have his or her identity remain anonymous. Christians (2005:145) suggests that it is the researcher's obligation to keep the respondents' identity and responses private. The researcher ensured that anonymity of participants was respected when reporting on the interviews carried out and the observations made. Tedlock (2005:468) suggests that a respondent's anonymity is guaranteed when a given response cannot be matched with a given participant.

3.7.5 Harm to participants

In any research, participants must be protected from physical, social, emotional and spiritual harm or from potential harm of any nature (Patton, 2002:274). In this study, the researcher ensured that none of the participants were exposed to any harm by not asking private and sensitive questions.

3.8 CONCLUSION

The chapter highlighted the research methodology. The qualitative design, the sample and the sampling procedure were discussed. The chapter also examined the instruments used which are the observation and the interviews. The validity, reliability and trustworthiness of the study were established. Data collection procedures, including the pilot study, were also discussed as well as data analysis and ethical issues. The next chapter will present and analyse data.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of the study was to establish the quality of ECD programmes in Harare primary schools in Zimbabwe. The findings are discussed under the sub-topics derived from the sub-research questions; the management and organisation of ECD programmes, components of an ECD programme, ECD personnel qualification, teaching methods in ECD, availability of resources in ECD and strategies that can be used to improve the quality of ECD programmes. For each sub-topic derived from the sub-research question, data from the observation checklists and in-depth interviews is presented.

The following section provides the biographical data which provided the context in which data was gathered.

4.2 BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

The table below shows the biographical data which provides the context in which data was collected from the ten schools under study.

Table 4:1 Biographical data of school heads, ECD teachers and ECD parents (N=30)

RESPONDENTS	BIOGRAPHICAL VARIABLE	VARIABLE DESCRIPTION	FREQUENCY
ECD TEACHERS	Gender	Male	4 (40%)
		Female	6 (60%)
		Total	*10(100%)*
	Qualification	Certificate	2 (20%)
		Diploma	4 (20%)
		Bed	4 (40%)
		Med	0 (0%)
		Total	*10 (100%)*
	Teaching experience	0-2 years	3 (30%)
		3-5 years	7 (70%)
		Total	*10(100%)*
SCHOOL HEADS	Gender	Female	5 (50%)
		Male	5 (50%)
		Total	*10(100%)*
	Qualification	Diploma	1 (10%)
		Bed	4 (40%)
		Med	5 (50%)
		Total	*10(100%)*
	Teaching experience	0-2 years	4 (40%)
		3-5 years	6 (60%)
		Total	*10(100%)*
ECD PARENTS	Gender	Male	5 (50%)
		Female	5 (50%)
		Total	*10(100%)*
	Qualification	No qualification	1 (10%)
		Certificate	1 (10%)
		Diploma	4 (40%)
		Degree	4 (40%)
		Total	*10(100%)*
	Number of years as an SDC member	0-2 years	8 (80%)
		3-5 years	2 (20%)
		Total	*10(100%)*

Table 4.1 shows that there were higher numbers of females represented than males in the study. The table further reveals that the ECD teachers had varied qualifications with the lowest qualification being represented by the minority while the highest were the majority. Few participants in the study had less teaching experience compared to those who had more teaching experience.

The gender representation for the school heads in the study was equal. The school heads' qualifications were varied with fewer low qualified than highly qualified heads. The table further reveals that the majority of the school heads had longer periods of work experience.

The table also shows that the gender representation of the parents under study was equal. The table further highlights that the majority of the parents had some form of qualification. The majority of the parents in the study were committee members for fewer years than the minority of the parents.

After having presented the biographical data, the next section presents and analyses data according to the study's sub-research questions.

4.3   THE MANAGEMENT AND ORGANISATION OF ECD PROGRAMMES

Table 4:2 Observation checklist findings on the management and organisation of ECD programmes

Aspect	Management of play areas		Total
	Good	Poor	
Music and movement	6 (60%)	4 (40%)	10 (100%)
Dramatic play area	8 (80%)	2 (20%)	10 (100%)
Book corner area	6 (60%)	4 (40%)	10 (100%)
Mathematics and Science area	5 (50%)	5 (50%)	10 (100%)
Art area	8 (80%)	2 (20%)	10 (100%)
Block area	9 (90%)	1(10%)	10 (100%)
Book corner	6 (60%)	4 (40%)	10 (100%)
Fine motor area	7 (70%)	3 (30%)	10 (100%)
Outdoor area	8 (80%)	2 (20%)	10 (100%)

Table 4.2 shows that it was observed that the majority of the following areas in the schools showed good management: dramatic play area, fine motor area, art area and outdoor area, while the minority showed poor management. Having presented the observation checklist results, school heads' responses are presented in the next sub-section.

4.3.1 School heads' responses to in-depth interviews on management and organisation of ECD programmes

Data from in-depth interviews revealed that the school heads were familiar with their duties of providing a quality ECD programme in relation to their management of ECD programmes. The excerpts below reflect their awareness of administration expectations of ECD programmes:

> "I liaise with the School Development Committee (SDC) to ensure that the teachers are motivated through incentives and that the teachers remunerated by the SDC are well paid" (Head participant 9).

> "I make sure that, the ECD children are attended to daily so as to ensure their safety" (Head participant 2).

"I ensure proper interpretation of the ECD curriculum, Government policies and syllabus" (Head participant 6).

"I organise staff development workshops and make sure that the ECD teacher gets the required material resources to run the ECD class" (Head participant 4).

"I hold teachers' meetings and parents' meetings that inform them about the ECD curriculum and ECD child development" (Head participant 3).

The school heads also revealed that they were aware that quality management of ECD programmes was possible with the help of other delegated administrators and that this had a strong impact on the quality of ECD programmes. The excerpts below show the school heads' awareness of the need to delegate:

"The ancillary staff is involved in the management of the ECD programme by cleaning up the ECD premises, maintaining the play equipment and play areas" (Head participant 10).

"The SDC assists in the management of ECD programmes by looking into school repairs and maintenance of outdoor play equipment" (Head participant 1).

"The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education is involved in the supervision and appraisal of the ECD programme" (Head participant 7).

"Together with the ECD teachers, the teacher-in-charge (TIC) plans for the ECD children's outings. The TIC also allocates resources to ECD teachers" (Head participant 3).

"The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education offers in-service training in liaison with non-governmental organisations that fund the programmes" (Head participant 8).

The school heads unanimously agreed that they were not sure of how they should manage the ECD programmes and were in need of continual training. They appreciated the staff development workshops they had participated in highlighting that these had given them an understanding of ECD children's development and management. The statements below demonstrate these sentiments:

"I must say the staff development workshops that I got from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education have helped me to cope with the un-sureness" (Head participant 3).

"I am not clear on how the ECD programme is managed, since what I am doing is just trial and error" (Head participant 9).

"My understanding of 4-5 year olds' development and its management is very poor because I trained for junior teaching" (Head participant 5).

"While staff development courses offered by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education have helped me with ECD programme management, I need more" (Head participant 2).

Having presented the school heads' responses to in-depth interviews on the management and organisation of ECD programmes, the following section presents findings on the ECD teachers' responses.

4.3.2 The ECD teachers' responses to in-depth interviews on the management of ECD programmes

Data from the ECD teachers' in-depth interviews indicate that they received minimal support from the school administration. The teachers revealed that the school heads did not buy the required play equipment or, if they did, they did so only after a lot of coaxing. The teachers also highlighted that the school administrators held on to the toys instead of giving them to the ECD children to play with. The excerpts below illustrate these points:

"Even though the ECD children are in large numbers and pay their fees just like the other higher grades, they are the last to get resources allocated to them" (ECD teacher participant 5).

"The school head never follows the stipulated government teacher to pupil ratio because this is looked upon as a fundraising project for the school" (ECD teacher participant 1).

"I am not happy with the management of the ECD programme because the school does not have child-sized furniture and the resources are not enough" (ECD teacher participant 10).

> *"My administrator keeps the ECD children's playground key and if she is not around, the children do not use the play equipment"* (ECD teacher participant 6).

> *"The school has resources that were donated by an NGO in January 2012, but are locked up and the argument is that the ECD children will break the toys"* (ECD teacher participant 9).

The ECD teachers also revealed that they were motivated through incentives while a few noted that they did not get incentives which had a negative impact on the quality of ECD services they provided. The statements below demonstrate these views:

> *"I get very little incentive and this is de-motivating and consequently impacts negatively on my work"* (ECD teacher participant 7).

> *"I do not get any incentives and this discourages me strongly"* (ECD teacher participant 10).

> *"The lack of incentives affects my attitude towards work and my service delivery is poor"* (ECD teacher participant 4).

> *"I get a good salary from the SDC and I also get an incentive which is satisfactory and this affects my service delivery positively"* (ECD teacher participant 2).

Data from in-depth interviews with the teachers also revealed that the ECD teachers were familiar with their administrative roles in the ECD classroom and play area. They noted that they were responsible for planning the ECD children's play and learning, comforting them when in pain and ensuring that the play equipment was safe. Excerpts from the interviews reflecting these sentiments are given below:

> *"I plan, guide and supervise ECD children's play and learning. I also comfort those who are distressed in one way or the other"* (ECD teacher participant 1).

> *"I check the play equipment daily to see whether they are safe for the children to play with and if they need to be repaired I alert the head and the ancillary staff"* (ECD teacher participant 9).

> *"I carry out health checks every morning and if a child has a problem I let the parents know so that the child gets the necessary assistance"* (ECD teacher participant 3).

"I communicate with the parents on the progress of their ECD children" (ECD teacher participant 8).

The ECD teachers unanimously agreed that they were not happy with the administration of ECD programmes. They noted, for example, that the school heads did not buy the resources required by the ECD teachers for the ECD children because they argued that it was not an exam class. They revealed that the school heads had a negative attitude towards ECD resource allocation. The statements below highlight these sentiments:

> *"I am not happy with the way the ECD programme is run because I do not get enough resources and this compromises my service delivery"* (ECD teacher participant 9).

> *"I am not happy with the way the ECD programme is run in my school"* (ECD teacher participant 1).

> *"I am not happy with the way the ECD programme is run by the administrator because he tells me that the ECD class is not an exam class"* (ECD teacher participant 7).

> *"The school head is just not supportive of this ECD programme and I am not happy"* (ECD teacher participant 2).

> *"The administrator is not interested in the ECD programme though he knows what should be bought from the in-service training he got from the ECD trainers"* (ECD teacher participant 6).

The following sub-section presents the ECD parents' responses to in-depth interviews on the management and organisation of ECD programmes.

4.3.3 The ECD parents' responses to in-depth interviews on the management of ECD programmes

Data from the interviews with parents shows that they were aware of their importance in the management of ECD programmes. The statements below illustrate this view:

> *"I help run the ECD programme through making a follow-up of parents' payment of fees"* (Parent participant 5).

"I donated play equipment especially for the play areas in the ECD classroom" (Parent participant 2).

"I pay for my child's tuition fees" (Parent participant 7).

"I am involved in fundraising at the school" (Parent participant 3).

"As a committee member I am involved in decision making on the incentives of the teachers" (Parent participant 6).

The parents further highlighted that they were generally happy with the management of the ECD programmes though there were things they felt could be improved. The statements below highlight these sentiments:

"I am happy with the ECD programme because I do not need to engage a maid who is an expense for me" (Parent participant 1).

"I am not happy with the state of the playground and I think the school can maintain it in a better manner" (Parent participant 10).

"I save my money because the ECD programmes are cheaper than the private nursery schools" (Parent participant 4).

"I can already buy the uniform in advance for my child because I know that the child will get a place at this school for grade one" (Parent participant 8).

"I am happy because my child is able to name colours, can count up to 10, speak English and retell stories with understanding" (Parent participant 2).

"I am not happy with the state of the toilets at this centre and the school can manage it in a better manner than what is happening" (Parent participant 9).

The following section presents findings on the components of quality ECD programmes.

4.4 COMPONENTS OF QUALITY ECD PROGRAMMES

4.4.1 ECD policies

4.4.1.1 The school heads' responses to in-depth interviews on the availability of ECD policies

Data from the school heads' responses to in-depth interviews showed that the schools had ECD policies and regulations that governed and standardised the quality of management of ECD programmes. The school heads highlighted that the policies were rather vague on the practicalities of running the ECD programmes. The statements below reflect the findings:

> "The school has the Statutory Instrument 106 of 2005 and the syllabus" (Head participant 9).

> "I find that the ECD policies lack clarity" (Head participant 3).

> "This school has all the circulars that led to the implementation of the inclusion of 4-5 year olds in primary schools" (Head participant 1).

> "The ECD policies are rather vague on the practicalities of how to run the ECD programmes" (Head participant 2).

> "The school has all the circulars and policies which offer guidelines on teacher to pupil ratio, ventilation and hygienic standards and so on" (Head participant 10).

Furthermore, the school heads indicated that, while the policies existed, they found it difficult to adhere to policy requirements because they did not have the finance and the power to do so. For example, the school heads noted that the schools did not have adequate classroom and outdoor space per child, adequate toilets as per the toilet-pupil ratio of 1:8 and 1:20 teacher-to-pupil ratio. The excerpts below highlight these views:

> "The ECD children are using the grades one to three toilets which are not hygienically maintained and are not as specified by the legislature" (Head participant 8).

"While we have these guidelines we do not have a well ventilated classroom since we converted a garage because the fees paid cannot suffice to build an ECD classroom" (Head participant 4).

"While the ECD policies give specifications on the running of ECD programmes, I find it difficult to adhere to them" (Head participant 1).

"I cannot stick to the teacher to pupil ratio because this area has a large catchment area of parents who are by right meant to bring their ECD children here" (Head participant 3).

"The school has the policies which state that, ECD children should have child-sized toilets but they do not have the specified toilets because the financial resources do not permit" (Head participant 6).

The following sub-section presents the ECD teachers' responses to in-depth interviews on the ECD policies' availability.

4.4.1.2 The ECD teachers' responses to in-depth interviews on the availability of ECD policies

Findings from ECD teachers' responses to in-depth interviews on the availability of ECD policies that guide the management of ECD programmes reflected that the majority of ECD teachers were aware of the policies' availability while some were not aware of these policies. The excerpts below illustrate these findings:

"I only became familiar with the ECD policies and regulations when I went to study for a BEd (ECD)" (ECD teacher participant 3).

"I was not aware that there are ECD policies until I went for a staff development workshop called for by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education" (ECD teacher participant 10).

"I have an ECD syllabus which guides me on the implementation of the ECD curriculum" (ECD teacher participant 5).

"I am not aware that there are ECD policies that govern and standardise the ECD programmes" (ECD teacher participant 6).

"I have heard about the ECD policies but I am not familiar with their contents" (ECD teacher participant 7).

While the ECD teachers were aware of these policies, they highlighted that some of the policies were not attainable. For example, they highlighted that they had never gone for yearly health check-ups, the space for the ECD children was not as per policy requirements and the pupil-to-toilet ratio was also not attainable. The teachers also noted that some policies were not adhered to like the teacher-to-pupil ratio. The excerpts below highlight these views:

*"I have never gone for a health check-up since I joined the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education apart from the one I had on my commencement of duty" (*ECD teacher participant 4).

"I realise that the school heads, are not adhering to these policies, for example, the space for each child is very limited and is not as per policy requirement" (ECD teacher participant 7).

"The 1:8 toilet-pupil ratio is unattainable because our ECD classes are very large and the ECD children are sharing sanitary facilities with the grades one to three" (ECD teacher participant 2).

"I am well versed with the ECD policies but the teacher to pupil ratio policy is not adhered to" (ECD teacher participant 5).

The following sub-section presents the parents' responses to the availability of ECD policies in Harare primary schools.

4.4.1.3 Parents' responses on the availability of ECD policies

Findings from the parents' responses to in-depth interviews on the availability of ECD policies highlighted that parents were not familiar with ECD policies. The parents noted that they were not aware that there were ECD policies and were not familiar with their contents. The statements below illustrate this unfamiliarity:

*"ECD policies! What is that?" (*Parent participant 10).

*"I have no idea what the ECD policies are all about" (*Parent participant 5).

*"I do not know anything about the ECD policies" (*Parent participant 3).

"I have heard about them but I do not know what they talk about" (Parent participant 6).

"As a teacher I know that there are circulars/policies on ECD regarding the inclusion of 4-5 year-olds in the primary schools but I cannot tell you what it is all about" (Parent participant 2).

The next sub-section presents findings on the guidance and counselling component of quality ECD programmes.

4.4.2 Guidance and counselling in ECD

4.4.2.1 School heads' responses to in-depth interviews on guidance and counselling in ECD

Data from the school heads' in-depth interviews on guidance and counselling in ECD highlighted that very little guidance and counselling was being offered for ECD children in Harare primary schools. They noted that guidance and counselling was offered at least once a week and sometimes once a month for the whole school but little was being done for ECD children. The school heads noted that they listened and offered advice to parents when necessary. They also revealed that they never made a follow-up on whether the ECD teachers offered guidance and counselling. The excerpts below illustrate these views:

"The school holds guidance and counselling sessions for the whole school once a week but nothing specific for ECD children" (Head participant 10).

"The school holds guidance and counselling sessions at least once a month for the whole school but not specifically for ECD children" (Head participant 8).

"The school holds guidance and counselling sessions as the need arises but very little is being done for ECD children" (Head participant 3).

"I have never made a follow up of whether the ECD teachers offer guidance and counselling in their classrooms because I do not know what to look for" (Head participant 6).

"If parents or guardians have issues that need guidance and counselling, I usually do it myself sometimes with the help of my deputy head but it is difficult since I am not a trained counsellor" (Head participant 4).

The school heads further revealed that the counsellors found it difficult to counsel ECD children as they did not have the skills to counsel these very young children. They also noted that the ECD children had limited language skills to express themselves. The school heads admitted that they did not have the skills required to counsel the ECD children. The school heads further highlighted that the ECD policy was silent about the guidance and counselling of ECD children. The statements below illustrate these views:

"The counsellors find it difficult to guide and counsel the ECD children because the ECD children have limited language to express themselves" (Head participant 7).

"The counsellors and I do not know how to counsel ECD children and the ECD policy is rather silent on guidance and counselling" (Head participant 2).

"I do not expect the teachers to guide and counsel ECD children because I also do not know how to help ECD children to express themselves and the policy is not helpful" (Head participant 9).

"The school finds it difficult to offer guidance and counselling to ECD children because they have limited language but we comfort them if they show emotional distress" (Head participant 1).

The following sub-section presents the ECD teachers' responses to in-depth interviews on guidance and counselling of ECD children.

4.4.2.2 The ECD teachers' responses to in-depth interviews on guidance and counselling of ECD children

Findings from in-depth interviews of ECD teachers revealed that few or no guidance and counselling services were being offered to ECD children. The teachers expressed that they only guided their ECD children through play and adult-guided activities like painting and drawing. They also highlighted that they listened to parents and gave advice if they could but they did not have the skills to counsel the ECD children and

parents. The teachers noted that they received brief theoretical courses at college and university but never got the practical guidance and counselling skills for ECD children. The statements below illustrate these findings:

"If parents have problems that they need to share I listen and offer a bit of advice if I can" (ECD teacher participant 7).

"I only guide the children through play and teacher directed activities" (ECD teacher participant 1).

"I offer a bit of guidance during activities but no counselling at all because I am not practically trained for it" (ECD teacher participant 5).

"I do not know how to counsel the ECD children though I do a bit of comforting if the children are stressed" (ECD teacher participant 2).

"To be honest with you I do not have the training to offer guidance and counselling since I only got theoretical training and never got the practical skills" (ECD teacher participant 4).

"I often discuss with my class life skills issues like protecting themselves from sexual abuse but I do nothing much about guidance and counselling" (ECD teacher participant 8).

"I talk to guardians when an ECD child is distressed so that the parents or guardians improve the home background of the child" (ECD teacher participant 6).

Having presented the ECD teachers' responses to in-depth interviews, the following sub-section presents the parents' responses to guidance and counselling in ECD.

4.4.2.3 The ECD parents' responses to in-depth interviews on guidance and counselling in ECD

Data from the ECD parents' responses to in-depth interviews on the quality of guidance and counselling services in ECD revealed that parents knew very little about counselling being offered in the ECD classrooms. The parents knew that the teachers offered guidance to children through rules and regulations and to parents on issues pertaining to ECD children. The parents admitted that occasionally they

got advice from the school heads and teachers if they required it. The statements below illustrate these points:

"I know that my child loves his teacher so much and listens to any rules that the teacher gives him" (Parent participant 9).

"My child sometimes refuses to listen to me and only listens to the teacher's guidance" (Parent participant 2).

"The teacher sometimes guides me on how to teach and guide my child at home" (Parent participant 5).

"I hear in parents' meetings that children get guidance and counselling here and there but I do not have the details of how this is done" (Parent participant 3).

"I do not know whether the school offers guidance and counselling except for what I heard in parents' meetings" (Parent participant 8).

"When I have problems I talk to the ECD teacher or the school head and I find the advice helpful" (Parent participant 4).

In the following sub-section, observation checklist results of quality nutrition, health and safety in ECD programmes are presented.

4.4.3 NUTRITION, HEALTH AND SAFETY IN ECD

4.4.3.1 Observation checklist on the findings of the quality of nutrition, health and safety status in ECD

Table 4:3 Observation checklist findings on the management and organisation of ECD programmes

Aspect	Management of play areas		Total
	Good	Poor	
Music and movement	6 (60%)	4 (40%)	10 (100%)
Dramatic play area	8 (80%)	2 (20%)	10 (100%)
Book corner area	6 (60%)	4 (40%)	10 (100%)
Mathematics and science area	5 (50%)	5 (50%)	10 (100%)
Art area	8 (80%)	2 (20%)	10 (100%)
Block area	9 (90%)	1(10%)	10 (100%)
Book corner	6 (60%)	4 (40%)	10 (100%)
Fine motor area	7 (70%)	3 (30%)	10 (100%)
Outdoor area	8 (80%)	2 (20%)	10 (100%)

Table 4.3 shows that it was observed that the majority of the following areas in the schools showed good management: dramatic play area, fine motor area, art area and outdoor area, while the minority showed poor management. Having presented the observation checklist results, school heads' responses are presented in the next sub-section.

4.4.3.2 School heads' responses on the nutrition, health and safety status in ECD

Data from the school heads' in-depth interviews revealed that they were making a concerted effort to promote NHS in ECD classrooms. They were doing this through orientation offered to parents on NHS issues, thorough supervision of ECD children's hygienic practices and play, ensuring that the ECD playground and equipment was maintained and discussing nutrition, health and safety issues with ECD children. Excerpts below illustrate these views:

"I ensure that the playground is kept clean and grass is cut short all the time and I ensure that the maintenance of the playground equipment is done regularly" (Head participant 8).

"I make sure that my teachers in ECD supervise the ECD children's play and hygienic practices all the time to ensure that they do not get hurt or infected" (Head participant 2).

"I ensure that when it is home time, there is always a teacher on duty to supervise the ECD children in the playground so that they are not fetched by strangers" (Head participant 10).

"Being a multicultural school I talk about nutritious food to the parents during meetings within the realm of their cultural and religious understanding" (Head participant 3).

"I have instructed and ensured that the ECD children have their tea break in the classroom so that teachers can assess whether the children have nutritious food" (Head participant 4).

The school heads also highlighted that some issues were not up to the expected standard such as cleanliness of the toilets, the safety and cleanliness of the play areas, maintenance of the play equipment, among others. The school heads also said that the school had a certificate of operation from the City Health but that this was not specifically for ECD children but for grades one to seven. The excerpts below highlight these views:

"The play equipment is not repaired promptly because we do not always have the finances required to do that" (Head participant 9).

"We have a certificate of operation for grades one to seven and non specific for ECD children" (Head participant 1).

"We were told to attach three to five year olds in our primary schools but were never told to register the programmes as per statutory Instrument 106 of 2005" (Head participant 2).

"The ancillary staff is short staffed and hence the playground is not always up to standard" (Head participant 5).

"I feel that the toilets are not hygienic at all since the ECD children are sharing the toilets with the infant classes" (Head participant 7).

The following sub-section presents the ECD teachers' responses to in-depth interviews on the NHS status in ECD.

4.4.3.3 ECD teachers' responses to in-depth interviews on the nutrition, health and safety status in ECD

Findings from ECD teachers' responses to in-depth interviews on the quality of nutrition, health and safety in the ECD learning environment revealed that the NHS status was promoted by the ECD teachers. The ECD teachers noted that they inspected the playground daily before the children went to play, kept a health record book, supervised the children's play diligently, ensured that children got first aid when they got hurt, and discussed nutrition, health and safety issues with ECD children and parents. Statements below highlight these assertions:

> *"I discuss NHS issues, like playing safely and laying down safety rules, balanced diet, brushing and maintaining teeth and so on, with my ECD class"* (ECD teacher participant 6).

> *"I ensure a safe environment for ECD children by supervising their learning, play and play equipment all the time"* (ECD teacher participant 1).

> *"I enforce hygienic practices like washing hands before eating and after visiting the toilet and so on"* (ECD teacher participant 7).

> *"If an ECD child is hurt I take him or her to the sports director who does first aid"* (ECD teacher participant 4).

> *"I ensure that all repairs are done as soon as possible"* (ECD teacher participant 3).

The ECD teachers also expressed dissatisfaction with the way some NHS issues were addressed like the lack of child-sized sanitary facilities and play equipment, the unhygienic state of the toilets, the unavailability of the first aid kit in the ECD classroom and their lack of training in first aid. The ECD teachers also noted that the health check-up policy was not being adhered to and no follow up was being made by the authorities and the recommendations pertaining to NHS appraisals done by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, were not addressed. The statements below illustrate these views:

"No matter how much the Education Officer recommends for change in aspects like upgrading the upkeep of sanitary facilities the school head does not take action" (ECD teacher Participant 10).

*"The play equipment is not child-sized and not developmentally appropriate as the ECD children are using the grades one to three's which exposes them to hurts"(*ECD teacher participant 1).

"The ECD children hold on to the sides of the toilet seats which is a health hazard for them because sometimes the toilet seats are messed up" (ECD teacher participant 6).

"When the ECD children get hurt, I refer them to the sports director who keeps the first aid kit for sports and is trained in first aid and I am not" (ECD teacher participant 3).

*"There is also no enforcement of the ECD policy on yearly health check-up for ECD personnel and I do not think my administrator knows about this requirement" (*ECD teacher participant 9).

In the following sub-section, parents' responses to in-depth interviews on the quality of NHS in the ECD learning environment in Harare primary schools are presented.

4.4.3.4 ECD parents' responses to in-depth interviews on the quality of nutrition and health and safety status in ECD

Data from in-depth interviews of ECD parents revealed a mixed opinion on the quality of nutrition, health and safety in the ECD learning environment. Some viewed it as good while others viewed it as poor. The parents noted that they got orientation discussions towards nutrition, children were always monitored and the classrooms were well-ordered. Parents, however, highlighted that the toilets and the playground were not hygienic. Statements below highlight these findings:

*"The playground has very long grass and I am afraid one day snakes will bite my child" (*Parent participant 7).

"We got orientation during the first days of what makes a balanced diet" (Parent participant 1).

"The school gives you an account of how your child got hurt and how he was treated and I am happy about it" (Parent participant 4).

"Whenever I bring or fetch my child there is always a teacher attending to ECD children and supervising them" (Parent participant 2).

"The classroom is always smart and the tables and chairs are child-sized. However, the toilets are very dirty and smelly" (Parent participant 5).

"The play-ground is littered with broken chairs and I wonder how the ECD children manage to keep safe and not fall over the broken furniture" (Parent participant 8).

The following sub-section presents findings on parental involvement in ECD.

4.4.4 Parental involvement in ECD

4.4.4.1 The school heads' responses to in-depth interviews on parental involvement in ECD

Data from the school heads' responses to in-depth interviews on parental involvement in ECD highlighted that parental involvement was partly good. Parents paid their children's tuition fees, were involved in fundraising, attended meetings and consulted with ECD teachers on their children's progress. The statements below highlight these views:

"Parents pay the children's tuition fees" (Head participant 8).

"Parents pay some money if children are meant to go for field trips" (Head participant 2).

"Parents attend consultation days" (Head participant 5).

"Parents buy and donate toys for ECD children" (Head participant 3).

"Parents come for sporting of their ECD children and fundraising activities" (Head participant 10).

The school heads further noted that some parents were not fully involved in ECD programmes and that this compromised the quality of ECD programmes. The

parents did not participate in fundraising, sports days, pay tuition fees and consult the teachers on their ECD children's progress. The school heads also highlighted that, in some instances, they did not ask the parents to volunteer their services. The statements below illustrate these views:

> *"I do not ask the parents to volunteer to accompany the ECD children for field trips because they are not insured and they would concentrate on their child"* (Head participant 6).

> *"When we call for meetings and consultation days some parents never turn up"* (Head participant 7).

> *"Some parents are not forthcoming in the payment of tuition fees and levies and this spoils our plans of making ECD programmes high in quality"* (Head participant 1).

> *"Some parents do not participate in fundraising activities"* (Head participant 9).

> *"Some parents are not forthcoming in participating in school activities"* (Head participant 4).

The following sub-section presents the ECD teachers' responses to in-depth interviews on parental involvement in ECD.

4.4.4.2 ECD teachers' responses to in-depth interviews on parental involvement in ECD

Findings from the ECD teachers' responses to in-depth interviews on parental involvement as a quality indicator showed that the parents were partly involved in ECD programmes though the teachers had not invited them to be resource persons. They noted that parents were involved in fundraising, donation of toys, toy making, attending parents' meetings and consulted teachers formally and informally about their ECD children's progress. The statements below highlight these views:

> *"I ask the parents to donate play equipment and other material resources since the school administration is not forthcoming in buying these toys and they do so gladly"* (ECD teacher participant 1).

"If you look at the play areas, you can see that, all the equipment is different as it is coming from different homes" (ECD teacher participant 9).

"I invite parents for consultation formally and informally and most of them attend" (ECD teacher participant 2).

"I ask parents to donate stationery and toys and they are very forthcoming" (ECD teacher participant 7).

"I ask parents to help in toy making and they do so gladly, but I have never asked them to be resource persons here" (ECD teacher participant 4).

The ECD teachers also further noted that some parents were not fully involved in ECD programmes. The ECD teachers highlighted that the parents did not donate the toys and materials like crayons, paints and did not pay fees and trip fares for the ECD children. Children often talked about their parents' contributions and those ECD children whose parents had not done any service to the school felt demoralised. The excerpts below highlight these views:

"When asked to participate in school activities parents say that, they are too busy and this affects the ECD children whose parents never assist negatively as the children tease each other about it" (ECD teacher participant 8).

"Some parents do not donate toys as we would have agreed and their children feel it so much when those children whose parents are forthcoming talk about it" (ECD teacher participant 3).

*"Some parents are not forthcoming in toy making and I end up doing it with the same volunteering parents" (*ECD teacher participant 6).

"Some toys donated are of poor quality and harmful to the ECD children even though I would have given them the specifications of the kind of toys I want" (ECD teacher participant 10).

"Some parents do not come for consultation days I guess because they think this is all play and no learning is taking place" (ECD teacher participant 5).

The next sub-section presents the findings on parents' responses to in-depth interviews on the quality of parental involvement in ECD.

4.4.4.3 ECD parents' response to in-depth interviews on parental involvement in ECD

Findings from the parents' responses to in-depth interviews highlighted that parents were partly involved in the ECD children's education and care. The parents noted that they participated in fundraising activities of the school, paid the children's tuition fees, helped with toy and chart making and donated toys. The statements below highlight these views:

> "As part of the SDC, I plan and attend parents' meetings and children's fun days" (Parent participant 9).

> "I participate in fundraising and I pay my child's fees" (Parent participant 5).

> "I help with toy and chart making since our school cannot afford to buy adequate toys so we improvise" (Parent participant 2).

> "I come for consultation days" (Parent participant 10).

> "I donate toys here at school since the school cannot afford to buy adequate toys for our children" (Parent participant 3).

Some parents further noted that they were not fully involved in ECD education and care and this had a negative impact on quality. Some parents also highlighted that they were too busy to volunteer their services. In addition, some could not afford to pay the fees. The statements below illustrate these sentiments:

> "I hear the teachers complaining that some parents do not come for consultation days" (Parent participant 8).

> "I find this programme all play so I hardly have time to play" (Parent participant 1).

> "I have no time to get involved in the ECD programme because my work place is so tight and the time they call for meetings is not practical for me" (Parent participant 4).

> "Parents do not donate toys as required by the school for ECD children" (Parent participant 7).

"As a committee member I notice that some parents are not participating in the ECD programmes in that they do not pay their children's fees" (Parent participant 6).

The following sub-section presents the in-depth interview responses of all participants to stakeholder involvement in ECD.

4.4.5 Stakeholder involvement in ECD

4.4.5.1 School heads' responses to in-depth interviews on stakeholder involvement in ECD

Data from the school heads' in-depth interviews revealed that there was a lead ministry which coordinated the ECD programmes which was the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. Findings also revealed that several ministries were contributing positively towards ECD programmes. The stakeholders that contributed positively to ECD children's all round development included the Ministry of Defence through the police's life skills education, the Ministry of Health through immunisations and health inspections and Social Welfare through the assistance for vulnerable children. Non-governmental organisations also contributed donations and sponsored programmes that supported the all round development of ECD children. The statements below illustrate these views:

> *"The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education is the lead ministry that our school deals with regarding the education and care of ECD children"* (Head participant 10).

> *"There are other ministries like the Ministry of Health which gives immunisations as well as health and hygiene talks to our ECD children here"* (Head participant 3).

> *"Non-governmental organisations like UNICEF make donations sometimes at my school as well as getting immunisations from the Ministry of Health done"* (Head participant 7).

> *"The Ministry of Health is also responsible for inspecting the health status of this school"* (Head participant 4).

"The Social Welfare has an input in the running of ECD programmes as they see to the general welfare of ECD children especially those who may have been abused" (Head participant 8).

"The Ministry of Defence discusses life skills issues like abuse and safety especially road safety with our ECD children" (Head participant 5).

The school heads further noted that the lead ministry presented them with challenges. For example, the lead ministry instructed the schools to teach writing and to teach in subject form. The local government did not help in the construction of the ECD infrastructure. The excerpts below illustrate these findings:

"We face challenges from the lead ministry as they give us instructions to teach ECD children to write which is not recommended for this age group" (Head participant 6).

"Being the lead ministry, the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education instructs us to teach in subject form" (Head participant 1).

"The local government and the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education do not give the school money to build infrastructure, buy equipment and toys for ECD children" (Head participant 9).

"The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education as the lead ministry is not supporting the ECD programme financially" (Head participant 2).

In the next sub-section, ECD teachers' responses to in-depth interviews on stakeholder involvement in ECD are presented.

4.4.5.2 ECD teachers' responses to in-depth interviews on stakeholder involvement in ECD

In response to in-depth interviews on stakeholder involvement in ECD education and care, ECD teachers highlighted that the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education was the lead ministry in the running of ECD programmes while other ministries like the Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Health, local government and the NGOs were positively and negatively involved. The statements below illustrate these views:

"The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education is the lead ministry in the running of ECD programmes" (ECD teacher participant 9).

"The ECD Education officer (EO) arranges staff development workshops for ECD teachers and for school heads" (ECD teacher participant 2).

"The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education is the lead ministry which supervises and appraises our ECD programme to see whether it follows a child-centred curriculum" (ECD teacher participant 3).

"After making health checks and I discover some illness needing treatment I refer the children to the clinic for further medical attention" (ECD teacher participant 6).

"I invite the Ministry of Health for immunisations and health checks" (ECD teacher participant 5).

"Police officers also address ECD children on sexual abuse matters and general life skills required in life" (ECD teacher participant 4).

The ECD teachers further noted that the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education as the lead ministry was not always helpful regarding the holistic development of ECD children. For example, the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education gave a directive to ECD teachers to teach writing and to hold sports competitions at district level which is not suitable for this age group. The ECD teachers also highlighted that some stakeholders were not forthcoming in their involvement in ECD programmes. For example, the local government did not assist in the holistic development of ECD children as they did not construct ECD infrastructure. The statements below highlight these views:

"In my district, the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education being the lead ministry in ECD programmes gave us a directive to teach writing which is not proper for ECD children" (ECD teacher participant 3).

"I found the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education unhelpful sometimes because they gave us a directive to hold competitive sports which for ECD children is not encouraged" (ECD teacher participant 8).

"The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education does not make a follow up of the recommendations they make after appraisals of ECD programmes" (ECD teacher participant 1).

"I have complained about the teacher to pupil ratio but nothing has been done about it by our education officials" (ECD teacher participant 5).

*"The local government is not forthcoming in helping us construct infrastructure for ECD children" (*ECD teacher participant 10).

The parents' responses to in-depth interviews on stakeholder involvement in ECD in Harare primary schools are presented next.

4.4.5.3 Parents' responses to in-depth interviews on stakeholder involvement in ECD programmes

Findings from the study showed that parents had a vague idea about stakeholder involvement in ECD programmes. They noted that they saw the police and the nurses at the school sometimes but did not know the extent of their involvement in ECD programmes. Statements below illustrate these views:

"I only see the police here sometimes talking to our children about sexual abuse and road safety" (Parent participant 1).

"I have seen nurses here at the school making rounds in the toilets but I really do not know whether this has an impact on the running of ECD programmes" (Parent participant 9).

"Sometimes nurses through the teachers ask for immunisation cards which we send to school and the children get immunised if there is need" (Parent participant 2).

*"I have seen some NGOS like Save the Children offering food programmes and UNICEF donating toys and books through the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education" (*Parent participant 5).

"I do not know of any other stakeholders that are involved in ECD programmes but I suspect that nurses are part of the programme" (Parent participant 8).

"I have seen the police around the school and I suppose their duty is to promote security here" (Parent participant 10).

Having reported the findings on the components of quality ECD programmes, the next section presents the findings of the current study on personnel qualification in ECD.

4.5   THE LEVEL OF ECD PERSONNEL QUALIFICATION

4.5.1 Observation checklist findings of ECD personnel qualifications

Table 4:4 Showing observation checklist findings of ECD activities offered by the ECD teachers

Activities	Level of appropriateness		Total
	Appropriate	Not appropriate	
Brief routines	10 (100%)	0 (0%)	10 (100%)
Long free play periods	10 (100%)	0 (0%)	10 (100%)
Short teacher guided activities	10 (100%)	0 (0%)	10 (100%)
Pupil selected activities	10 (100%)	0 (0%)	10 (100%)

Table 4.4 shows that the activities being offered were developmentally appropriate as they were well paced and were accorded proper times. All ten schools had brief routines like toilet time, breakfast and so on. All ten schools had long free play periods. Short teacher guided activities were also equally popular from the ten schools under study showing that the children's concentration span was being respected. Among the teacher guided activities were: story-time, counting, matching activities, free-drawing and painting, to name a few. Pupil selected activities were also given in all the schools under study and this showed the teachers' level of training and understanding of ECD children. Having presented the observation checklist results, the next sub-section presents the school heads' responses to in-depth interviews on personnel qualification.

4.5.2 School heads' responses to in-depth interviews on personnel qualification

Data from the study revealed that the school heads believed that the higher the qualification, the higher the quality of ECD education and care provided. The school heads also believed that ECD teacher qualification without a positive attitude towards ECD children impacted negatively on the quality of service delivery. The statements below highlight these views:

> *"The teacher with a Diploma in ECD is not professional and passionate with children and I blame her incompetence on training as well as the Government for letting people take up jobs they are not interested in due to unemployment"* (Head participant 8).

> *"My ECD teacher has a Bachelor of Education (ECD), she interprets the syllabus well and her teaching is highly child-centred"* (Head participant 3).

> *"The ECD teacher holds a Diploma in Early Childhood Development (Dip in ECD) and she manages her class professionally as compared to the para-professional"* (Head participant 7).

> *"The ECD teacher's qualification has a strong impact on the service delivery as she prepares and displays her charts professionally and with expertise"* (Head participant 4).

> *"Compared to the para-professional I had before, this degreed teacher manages the class professionally, competently as well as the ECD curriculum"* (Head participant 6).

The school heads further noted that they were not specialists in ECD but had benefited from staff development workshops offered by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. The school heads also felt that the ECD teachers had been instrumental and were still instrumental in their understanding and management of ECD programmes. They noted that they needed further training in the ECD curriculum, mentoring and assessment of ECD teachers. The statements below highlight these views:

> *"I hold a Masters in Education but my specialisation is in junior school so I do not know anything about ECD"* (Head participant 2).

"I have attended workshops on the development of the ECD child and these were helpful though I am still limited in the administration of this age group's curriculum" (Head participant 1).

"I need training in the mentoring of ECD teachers especially the newly deployed and the student teachers that we get here" (Head participant 9).

"My understanding of ECD children is poor and when I see them playing in the different play areas, I think that the teacher is wasting time" (Head participant 6).

"The ECD teacher is patient with me and is often educating me on what I should buy for ECD children and how the play-ground should be like" (Head participant 4).

"I need to understand the ECD curriculum more, especially how to handle the 4-5 year olds, hence the need for staff development" (Head participant 8).

In the next section, the ECD teachers' responses to in-depth interviews on personnel qualification are presented.

4.5.3 ECD teachers' responses to in-depth interviews on personnel qualification

Findings from the ECD teachers' responses to interviews highlighted that the level of qualification gave ECD teachers confidence and competence in service delivery which had a positive impact on the quality of ECD education. The excerpts below illustrate these findings:

"I have attended staff development workshops on planning sports in ECD and I find myself more competent and I offer quality service delivery" (ECD teacher participant 4).

"I hold a Bachelor of Education in Early Childhood Development (BECD) and I find myself more confident, compared to the time when I had a certificate in ECD" (ECD teacher participant 9).

"I have attended workshops on toy making and I find it easy to furnish my class with appropriate toys since my school cannot buy the toys I require for the ECD class" (ECD teacher participant 3).

"Since I hold a BECD, I would like to go for a Masters in ECD as this will make me more competent in the teaching and management of ECD children" (ECD teacher participant 7).

"My qualification helps me to understand ECD children and offer appropriate help as per developmental milestones" (ECD teacher participant 2).

Some teachers felt that staff development workshops did not seem to make a difference in the school heads' understanding of ECD programmes and the ECD children. The ECD teachers explained that the school heads still insisted on a formal curriculum for ECD children. The excerpts below illustrate these views:

"My school head insists that I follow the same timetable as the whole school, but for peace's sake I use the pro-ECD timetable and display the master timetable" (ECD teacher participant 1).

"My school head expects me to teach writing to ECD children, though she was staff developed that the ECD curriculum is play-way in nature" (ECD teacher participant 10).

The next sub-section presents the parents' responses to in-depth interviews on personnel qualification in ECD.

4.5.4 ECD parents' response to in-depth interviews on personnel qualification in ECD

Data from in-depth interviews on personnel qualification revealed that parents believed that qualified personnel presented themselves professionally to ECD children. Some parents knew that their ECD teachers had a diploma in ECD and others knew that their ECD teachers had a degree in ECD. Some parents did not know the level of the ECD teachers' qualifications but they assumed that the teachers were trained judging from the way the teachers were handling the ECD children. Some parents also believed that the ECD teachers were not trained because they played with the children more than teaching. Illustrations below highlight these views:

"The ECD teacher is excellent because I cannot spend a few minutes with that age group without complaining, so I guess she has a qualification of some sort in ECD" (Parent participant 9).

"The teacher has a degree in ECD, is loveable and my child believes that she is knowledgeable about everything" (Parent participant 3).

"My child can speak English and shares play materials well with his siblings which was difficult before he went to school so I believe the teacher is qualified" (Parent participant 4).

"The teacher has a Diploma in ECD and she knows how to teach because my child can now retell a story in English and he is generally good mannered" (Parent participant 2).

"I do not know the level of the ECD teacher's qualification but the children are given adequate time to play, draw, paint and they seem to enjoy so much" (Parent participant 7).

The parents in the study highlighted that they would like the ECD teachers to equip them with skills they used to handle ECD children and the ECD curriculum so that what was learnt at school would be carried forward at home. In contrast, some parents doubted whether the ECD teachers were trained since all the children did was play and were not taught. The excerpts below illustrate these views:

"As a parent I would like to be trained on what to teach at home so as to make a follow up of the teacher's instructions" (Parent participant 10).

"I would like to be educated to understand this learning through play which is new to me because I am used to exam oriented teaching" (Parent participant 4).

"I doubt if the teacher is trained because the children are never engaged in serious work" (Parent participant 7).

"Do nannies train? I do not think so. I believe she is just a caregiver who is playing with our children while we are at work" (Parent participant 1).

"I find the teacher's teaching strange because when I go to the ECD classroom I see them playing all the time, but the teacher tells me that, that is how the children learn" (Parent participant 5).

The next section presents findings on the teaching methods used in ECD.

4.6   TEACHING METHODOLOGY IN ECD

4.6.1 Observation checklist results of findings on the ECD teaching methods

Table 4:3 Observation checklist findings of the teaching methods used in ECD

Teaching method	Level of use		
	Used	Not used	Total
Drama/role play	10 (100%)	0 (0%)	10 (100%)
Songs and rhymes	10 (100%)	0 (0%)	10 (100%)
Project method	9 (90%)	1 (10%)	10 (100%)
Lecture method	0 (0%)	10 (100%)	10 (100%)

Table 4.5 shows that all the teachers engaged their ECD children in dramatic play, and songs and rhymes and that the majority of ECD teachers from the ten schools under study used the project method to teach ECD children. None of the ECD teachers in the study used the lecture method of teaching. Having presented the observation checklist results, the following sub-section presents the in-depth interview responses of all the participants.

4.6.2 School heads' responses on teaching methods used in ECD

Findings from school heads revealed that the majority of the school heads understood that the play-way method of teaching was used in teaching ECD children and this, in turn, improved the quality of ECD education and care. The interactive methods of teaching included songs, rhymes and drama/role play. The excerpts below highlight these views:

> *"The teaching is child-centred and hence the child develops holistically. My teacher uses drama, role play and games to teach ECD children"* (Head participant 9).

> *"Children learn better when they play and through songs and rhymes and through those songs they learn addition and subtraction, coordination and so on"* (Head participant 2).

"Children in ECD learn through songs and rhymes and it brings joy and at the same time children exercise as well" (Head participant 10).

"I have seen the ECD teachers using interactive methods of teaching like music and dance which helps develop the children's large motor skills" (Head participant 5).

"I have seen ECD children using role play/drama and they are exposed to blocks which makes them dramatise automatically" (Head participant 3).

However, some school heads did not understand the reason why teachers were using the play-way method of teaching. The excerpts below explain this statement:

"Whenever I go to the ECD classroom I see them playing all the time so I just wonder whether the teacher ever lectures to the ECD children" (Head participant 1).

"They say ECD children play but I cannot understand why parents have to pay so much money just for them to play which they can do at home" (Head participant 9).

"The ECD teacher seems to be lazy because all I see the ECD children do is play and no serious learning" (Head participant 8).

"I wonder what these colleges are giving us as teachers because all she does is play with the children" (Head participant 4).

The next subsection presents the teachers' responses to interviews on the teaching methods used in ECD.

4.6.3 ECD teachers' responses on the teaching methods used in ECD

Data from the ECD teachers' responses to the teaching methods used in ECD suggest that all teaching was child-centred and play-way in nature as expected by the ECD policies. The methods used included the project method, drama/role play and songs and dance. The teachers noted that the lecture method could not be used in ECD as stated by the ECD policies. Excerpts from the ECD teachers' responses to illustrate these views are below:

"I use child-centred and play-way methods of teaching ECD children and these include role play/drama, songs and rhymes and games" (ECD teacher participant 10).

"The lecture method does not apply in the ECD classroom as stated by the ECD policies" (ECD teacher participant 2).

"I must admit that the project method is sometimes difficult to implement though I use it" (ECD teacher participant 8).

"Sometimes I use the project method where children explore and discover new concepts" (ECD teacher participant 3).

The minority of the teachers noted that their school heads did not understand the play-way method of teaching and were always complaining about the ECD teachers' laziness. The excerpts below highlight these findings:

"I use play-way methods of teaching ECD children, but am often in trouble with the school head who often thinks that I waste a lot of learning time" (ECD teacher participant 9).

"I give them paint and blocks which they use in a play-way manner which helps develop problem solving skills though the school head does not appreciate it" (ECD teacher participant 4).

The following sub-section presents the parents' responses to in-depth interviews on the teaching methods used in ECD.

4.6.4 Parents' responses to teaching methods used in ECD

Data from some parents' responses on the teaching methods used by ECD teachers showed that ECD children were taught through play-way methods of teaching which included drama/role play, the project method, songs and rhymes. The excerpts below illustrate these findings:

"I see children play with dolls in the ground and in the block corner" (Parent participant 7).

> *"They are always playing but my child is able to sing rhymes on his own and to retell stories"* (Parent participant 2).

> *"When I get to the ECD classroom, I see and hear them singing songs with action and traditional songs"* (Parent participant 8).

> *"I have sometimes seen the children working in groups on projects like making a house together with straw and clay"* (Parent participant 4).

> *"I have seen children sing and dance"* (Parent participant 10).

Some parents noted that the teachers were wasting their ECD children's time because the ECD children were always playing and were not serious with their work. The statements below indicate these views:

> *"I see them play all day long and I do not hear them speak good English and I am disappointed, because this is one reason why I want my child to go to ECD"* (Parent participant 3).

> *"I see the ECD children play games and I often wonder whether they are learning but to my surprise I hear them speak good English, count up to ten and so on"* (Parent participant 9).

> *"These ECD children are playing all the time and I think these teachers are just maids here. I only bring my child to school because I do not want to look for a maid"* (Parent participant 1).

The next section presents findings on the availability of resources in ECD.

4.7   RESOURCE AVAILABILITY IN ECD

4.7.1 Observation checklist findings of ECD resource availability

Table 4:4 Observation checklists of findings on ECD resource availability

	Level of resource availability		
Resource	Available	Not available	Total
Child-sized chairs and tables	9 (90%)	1 (10%)	10 (100%)
Child-sized toilets	4 (40%)	6 (60%)	10 (100%)
Well ventilated rooms	7 (70%)	3 (30%)	10 (100%)
Open play space	10 (100%)	0 (0%)	10 (100%)
8:1 ratio of toilets	3 (30%)	7 (70%)	10 (100%)
Child-sized equipment	7 (70%)	3 (30%)	10 (100%)
Child-sized basins	3 (30%)	7 (70%)	10 (100%)
1:20 teacher-pupil ratio	1 (10%)	9 (90%)	10 (100%)

Table 4.6 reveals that, at the majority of schools, child-sized furniture, well ventilated rooms, open play space and child-sized equipment were available. The table further reveals that only a minority of the schools had child-sized basins, child-sized toilets and a ratio of 1 toilet to 8 pupils. The table also shows that only one school had adequate human resources as indicated by the expected teacher to pupil ratio. The majority of the schools' human resources were not adequate as seen by the large class sizes versus the number of personnel. Having presented the observation results, the next sub-section presents findings on material resources availability in ECD.

4.7.2 Material resources in ECD

4.7.2.1 School heads' responses on the adequacy of material resources in ECD

The majority of the school heads revealed that while some resources were adequate and age appropriate, some were not adequate. The adequate and age appropriate resources included the tables and chairs, see-saws and stationery but the majority of schools did not have play equipment like puzzles, beads for fine motor development, paints and scissors among others. The excerpts below highlight these statements:

> "The material resources are not age appropriate and are inadequate. In fact the ECD children are using the play equipment for the grade ones to three" (Head participant 9).

> "Some of the play materials are age appropriate while some are not and this affects the ECD children. For example, the toilets are too big and inadequate" (Head participant 2).

> "This school has age appropriate but inadequate material resources and this affects the children's play and activities" (Head participant 5).

> "We would like to have a variety of paints, play dough to name a few but we do not have that" (Head participant 7).

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> *"We do not have adequate material resources for ECD children, as this programme was forced upon us though we do not have proper infrastructure"* (Head participant 1).

Some school heads further highlighted that the ECD teachers were innovative as they improvised to meet the shortage of toys and play equipment. The following quotes illustrate this view:

> *"I have noticed that my teachers are very innovative because they asked the parents to donate toys and material resources" (*Head participant 4).

> *"The ECD teachers have also involved parents in toy making from junk material to try and arrest the shortage of play material" (*Head participant 8).

> *"The ECD teachers have made play materials like the music and movement things, dolls, balls and so on from junk material" (*Head participant 3).

In the next section ECD teachers' responses to in-depth interviews on the availability of material resources in ECD is presented.

4.7.2.2 ECD teachers' responses to in-depth interviews on material resources in ECD

The ECD teachers echoed the school heads' responses that the ECD programmes did not have adequate material resources but expressed mixed views on the age appropriateness of material resources available. The ECD teachers noted that they improvised some materials and these were adequate and included paper, crayons, tables and chairs. The materials that were not adequate included tricycles, slides, climbing frames among others. The statements below illustrate these views:

> *"Sometimes I wonder whether the school head knows that the ECD children exist here because she does not furnish the ECD classroom with adequate material resources" (*ECD teacher participant 5).

"The school does not have art materials, puzzles, scissors and play dough to name some of the material resources that are short" (ECD teacher participant 1).

"The ECD class does not have adequate material resources as the school head always says there is no money" (ECD teacher participant 4).

"The ECD children do not have adequate material resources like children's books as the ones you see here are personal hence it is difficult to give a variety of play activities" (ECD teacher participant 7).

In the next section, the parents' responses to in-depth interviews on material resources' availability in ECD in Harare primary schools are presented.

4.7.2.3 Parents' responses to in-depth interviews on material resources availability in ECD

Parents expressed mixed views on the availability of material resources. Some viewed the available resources as adequate while others viewed them as not adequate. The material resources available included crayons, paints, paper, toys, puzzles, dolls, blocks among others. The material resources that were inadequate included, among others, scissors, collage materials, easels for painting, beads and story books. The statements below illustrate these views:

"The ECD teachers complain that the material resources are not adequate but I do not know the truth" (Parent participant 9).

"The material resources are adequate as we donated and bought some stationery like paper, crayons and paint" (Parent participant 2).

"From the list that the teacher told us of what is required in ECD I only see a few in this ECD classroom, being an indication that there are inadequate material resources" (Parent participant 6).

"It looks like the school cannot buy the ECD children any material resources, so we donate material resources but it is not all the parents who can donate" (Parent participant 4).

"There are adequate material resources as I have hardly heard the school head complain about shortages of material resources in ECD" (Parent participant 7).

The following section presents the findings on the adequacy of human resources in ECD.

4.7.3 Human Resources in ECD

4.7.3.1 School heads' responses to in-depth interviews on the adequacy of human resources in ECD

Findings from the study showed that the school heads generally considered that the human resources were adequate. The statements below illustrate this view:

> "The ECD teacher has 30 children and complains that she is overworked but I cannot understand that because the other higher grades have classes with up to 40 children" (Head participant 8).

> "My ECD teacher says she should have 20 children only but this does not work since the school is supposed to absorb all the children in the surrounding areas" (Head participant 3).

> "After all they play, so the human resources are adequate" (Head participant 7).

> "My ECD teachers are adequate as I tried to stick to the 1:20 teacher to pupil ratio and because that, quality education and care is provided" (Head participant 5).

> "They say the teacher should have an assistant but I do not see the need because all the other teachers have the same size of classes so the human resources are adequate" (Head participant 1).

The next section presents the findings on ECD teachers' responses to the adequacy of human resources in ECD in Harare primary schools.

4.7.3.2 ECD teachers' responses to in-depth interviews on the adequacy of human resources in ECD

The ECD teachers' responses to in-depth interviews on the adequacy of human resources revealed that the teachers felt that they were overworked and were short-

staffed. This de-motivated them and, consequently, affected the quality of ECD programmes negatively. They noted that: the class sizes were too big, they should have assistant teachers and that the ECD programme was used as a fundraising project by the school administrators. The statements below illustrate these views:

"The human resources are inadequate as I am managing a class of fifty ECD children alone" (ECD teacher participant 2).

"The class size I have compromises my service delivery as I cannot give individualised attention to such a huge class" (ECD teacher participant 5).

"My class comprises of 50 children, is abnormal and I cannot give the individualised attention that I am meant to give" (ECD teacher participant 7).

"I think the ECD children's enrollment is used as a fundraising project because the classes are extremely big hence the human resources are not adequate" (ECD teacher participant 9).

"My class is the right size but I would need an assistant to help with managing the class which is a policy requirement" (ECD teacher participant 6).

The next section presents the ECD teachers' views on the adequacy of ECD human resources in Harare primary schools.

4.7.3.3 The parents' responses to in-depth interviews on the adequacy of human resources in ECD

Some of the parents noted that they believed that the ECD classes had adequate human resources while others said that they were not sure whether the human resources were adequate or not. A few of the parents noted that the human resources were adequate since it was all play and no learning. They also highlighted that the grounds' attendants and cleaners were in short-supply reading from the negligence of the toilets and poor playground maintenance. The statements below illustrate these views:

"I think that the grounds attendants are short judging from the way the playground is poorly maintained" (Parent participant 7).

"I see the teachers doing well so I can say the human resources are adequate" (Parent participant 2).

"I am not sure because I do not know how ECD children should be taught but I think the human resources are adequate" (Parent participant 3).

"The human resources are adequate because these children do not need to do much learning" (Parent participant 9).

"I think the cleaners are rather limited and this shows in the way the toilets are poorly maintained" (Parent participant 6).

"Why would the school need so many ECD teachers when it is all play? The human resources are adequate" (Parent participant 8).

The next section presents results on the availability of financial resources in ECD.

4.7.4 Financial resources in ECD

4.7.4.1 School heads' responses to interviews on the availability of financial resources in ECD

Data from the interviews showed that the schools had limited financial resources in ECD. The sources of the finance were tuition fees, levies and fundraising from the parents. The fees were inadequate and therefore the financial resources available did not cover the costs. In some cases, decisions regarding the money collected were only made by the responsible authorities. The excerpts illustrating these views are below:

> *"Though the parents pay the fees which are so low, we cannot decide anything without the responsible authority's approval"* (Head participant 4).

> *"The school gets financial resources from the community through tuition fees, levies and fundraising"* (Head participant 10).

> *"The financial resources are inadequate because parents are supposed to pay 10 us dollars for tuition per term"* (Head participant 2).

"Our locality is very poor, our parents cannot pay the tuition fees and the levy, so the finances are not enough" (Head participant 8).

"We get all the required payments but the responsible authority uses the money for their own benefit and consequently the financial resources are inadequate" (Head participant 5).

"Parents participate in fundraising but the financial resources are not adequate" (Head participant 7).

"Our Government says no child should be send away from school for not paying any tuition fees, so our financial resources are inadequate as some parents do not pay the tuition fees" (Head participant 9).

The next sub-section presents the ECD teachers' responses to financial resources' availability in Harare primary schools.

4.7.4.2 The ECD teachers' responses to in-depth interviews on the availability of financial resources

Data from the ECD teachers' responses to in-depth interviews highlighted that the financial resources were gathered from the parents. The ECD teachers were not certain whether the financial resources were adequate or inadequate since the heads did not make an effort to buy any resources for ECD children. The ECD teachers felt that the school heads had a negative attitude towards the use of financial resources towards ECD children's learning and development and this, in turn, affected the quality of ECD programmes negatively. The ECD teachers also felt that even when the finances were adequate, the school heads never prioritised buying resources for ECD children. The statements below highlight these views:

"We get our financial resources from the tuition fees paid by the parents" (ECD teacher participant 5).

"I sometimes receive money from fundraising so I guess that is one source of our financial resources" (ECD teacher participant 2).

"All the children pay the same tuition fees and participate in fundraising, but priority is given to higher grades under the understanding that the financial resources are inadequate" (ECD teacher participant 9).

"The administration makes no difference, whether they have the money or not they still do not buy anything for ECD children" (ECD teacher participant 4).

"I wonder whether the finances run short for ECD children and never for other activities because the school head is forever saying the finances are not enough"(ECD teacher participant 8).

"No matter how much money there is from the parents there is never anything bought for ECD children but rather the priority is given to higher grades" (ECD teacher participant 6).

The next sub-section presents findings on the availability of financial resources in ECD in Harare primary schools from parents' responses.

4.7.4.3 Parents' responses to in-depth interviews on the availability of financial resources

Findings from in-depth interviews of parents on the availability of financial resources indicated that the financial resources were inadequate as not all parents paid the tuition fees. Because financial resources were inadequate for the schools, the ECD classes did not get first preference in the allocation of material resources. The excerpts from the interviews highlight these views:

"The finances are not enough as you can see our geographical area (high density suburb) has a lot to say" (Parent participant 9).

"As a committee member I realise that, the school has very little financial resources" (Parent participant 3).

"The school buys resources for higher grades because I do not think the ECD children require financial assistance considering that all they do is play and in any case the financial resources are inadequate" (Parent participant 2).

"The parents here do not pay their fees and as an SDC committee member, I make a follow up for these fees which are already not adequate" (Parent participant 7).

"The tuition fees are little and from that little that we need to pay the bills and the teachers' incentives so the finances are not adequate" (Parent participant 6).

"As a committee member, I am well versed with the cash flows, the finances are inadequate" (Parent participant 8).

The following section presents the strategies that can be used to improve the quality of ECD programmes.

4.8 STRATEGIES THAT CAN BE USED TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF ECD PROGRAMMES

4.8.1 School heads' responses to in-depth interviews on strategies that can be used to improve the quality of ECD programmes

The school heads suggested a number of strategies that can be used to improve the quality of ECD programmes. They noted that the government must: assist in the construction of infrastructure, attract investors to boost the economy, ensure that the ECD programmes are supervised by trained personnel, ensure that tuition fees charged are reasonable for development purposes and that there is job creation for the youth. The excerpts below highlight these views:

"There should be more funding from the Government for ECD programmes to enable the administrators to buy adequate material resources" (Head participant 10).

"The government should assist in the construction of a separate and self-contained block for ECD children with sanitary facilities, play ground, play equipment and infrastructure that is age appropriate" (Head participant 1).

"That ECD programmes are supervised by ECD specialists and this includes the school administrators so that they respond to the needs of the ECD children fully" (Head participant 4).

"The government should be soft to investors so that we boost the country's economy and so that we will be able to furnish our ECD classrooms with adequate and age-appropriate resources" (Head participant 2).

"Education policies at colleges should improve since the caliber of ECD teachers being produced are not teacher material" (Head participant 7).

"The government should charge reasonable tuition fees which enables administrators to buy adequate material resources for ECD children" (Head participant 5).

"There should be job creation so that people choose jobs they want to do" (Head participant 8).

Strategies suggested by the ECD teachers to improve the quality of ECD programmes are presented next.

4.8.2 ECD teachers' responses to in-depth interviews on strategies that can be used to improve the quality of ECD programmes

The ECD teachers highlighted a few strategies that can be used to help improve the quality of ECD programmes. They suggested that: all ECD teachers get trained in first aid, all ECD classrooms have a first aid kit, appraisals made by the Education Officers on ECD programmes should be followed up strictly, awareness campaigns are carried out for parents and the community on the value of ECD, school heads are continually staff developed and that ECD teachers are involved in curriculum development and implementation. The following statements illustrate these views:

"Awareness campaigns on the value of ECD should be held so that all stakeholders know the importance of ECD programmes and take their part in ensuring its growth and development" (ECD teacher participant 10).

"The Education Officer who supervises ECD programmes should give honest reports on the unsuitability of the ECD environment and make a follow up to ensure that if the programme needs to be stopped, it should be because our ECD children are operating in very unhealthy conditions" (ECD teacher participant 1).

"ECD administrators should be continually staff developed so that they know the value of ECD and try to follow the policies to book, so that they own ECD programmes and budget for it honestly" (ECD teacher participant 6).

"ECD teachers should be involved in curriculum designing for effectiveness of curriculum implementation and running of ECD programmes" (ECD teacher participant 3).

"That all the ECD teachers are first aiders so that the process of helping injured ECD children is faster and efficient" (ECD teacher participant 5).

"Schools should ensure that each ECD classroom has a first aid kit" (Participant 4).

In the next sub-section parents' suggestions on the strategies that can be used to improve the quality of ECD programmes in Harare primary schools are presented.

4.8.3 Parents' responses to in-depth interviews on the strategies that can be used to improve the quality of ECD programmes

The parents in the study revealed some strategies that can be used to improve the quality of ECD programmes. They suggested that: there should be stronger parental involvement, a separate ECD block which is self-contained and that awareness campaigns for the parents and community on the value and development of ECD children should be done. The following excerpts highlight these suggestions:

"There should be stronger parental involvement so that we can be called in as resource persons in certain areas and can even accompany children for field trips as volunteers" (Parent participant 1).

"We need more awareness campaigns so that we know and understand what ECD is and thus be able to give the necessary assistance required in terms of resources" (Parent participant 10).

"I suggest that the school constructs a separate block for ECD children which makes them safe and their environment well maintained as per their needs and requirements" (Parent participant 2).

The following section discusses the findings.

4.9 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The purpose and focus of the study was to determine the quality of ECD programmes in Harare primary schools in Zimbabwe. This section discusses the findings of the study in the light of the following sub-headings derived from the study's sub-research questions presented in chapter 1: management and organisation of ECD programmes, components that make quality ECD education, personnel qualification in ECD, teaching methods used in ECD and resources available in ECD. The findings of the study are discussed in relation to the prevailing literature. Firstly, the management and organisation of ECD programmes is dealt with.

4.9.1 The management and organisation of ECD programmes

Findings from the observation checklist generally showed that the majority of the schools under study managed their ECD activity areas well, while the minority managed their play areas poorly. The school heads' responses to in-depth interviews revealed that they were aware that quality management and organisation of ECD programmes involved the supervision of the ECD curriculum and adherence to ECD policies. The study showed that school heads were not following the ECD policies even though this is in contradiction with UNICEF's (2000:6) Malawian study which revealed that adherence to ECD policies was part of management and organisation of ECD programmes which, in turn, promoted the quality of ECD programmes.

The school heads also highlighted that quality management and organisation of ECD programmes entailed the delegation of duties, resource allocation to subordinates and collaboration with other stakeholders. The delegation of duties involved giving responsibility to the teacher-in-charge to manage and allocate resources in ECD and the SDC fundraised for the school. The findings of the present study concur with Ciumwari's (2010:10) Kenyan study which revealed that availing of resources was one important management role in ECD which could be done by any member of the administrative team. The current study also revealed that the school heads were not certain how to manage ECD programmes. The school heads' lack of knowledge maybe because they were not ECD specialists as highlighted in the bio-data. It could

also be because the ECD policies lacked clarity on the practicalities of management and organisation of ECD programmes. The school heads' lack of knowledge made it difficult for them to mentor ECD student teachers and newly deployed ECD teachers, resulting in poor quality ECD programmes. The above situation repeated a Tanzanian study by Hyde and Kabiru (2003:49) who argued that school heads were not well informed about the ECD curriculum which meant that they were unaware of the achievements of ECD and the extent to which they should have been directly involved with the ECD classroom. The school heads in the present study, however, appreciated the staff development workshops offered by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, admitting that they had equipped them greatly with ECD management skills.

The ECD teachers in the current study noted that they were getting very little support from their administrators and school heads. This lack of support may have emanated from the fact that the school heads were not well versed with the ECD curriculum as they admitted in the interviews. It may also be because they viewed ECD programmes as all play and no learning. The present finding of the study confirms the Ghanaian findings by Hyde and Kabiru (2003:35) which highlighted the fact that school heads had very little involvement in the evaluation of ECD classrooms, in the teaching of ECD and the learning abilities of ECD children. However, the data from the interviews also revealed that some ECD teachers were motivated by their schools which had a positive impact on service delivery of the ECD teachers. In contrast, some ECD teachers said that their schools did not give them any motivation and this had a negative impact on the quality of ECD education. The fact that teachers did not get incentives could be because the schools were struggling to make ends meet due to the economic hardships.

ECD teachers in the present study were familiar with their administrative roles which included good provision of sanitary facilities, managing play and learning in the ECD classroom which had a positive influence on the quality of ECD education. The familiarity by ECD teachers of their administrative roles may be because they were

all ECD specialists as indicated in the bio-data table. Similarly, in Namibia, UNICEF (2000:9) noted that familiarity with administrative roles involved good provision, management and organisation of sanitary facilities, electricity, play and learning which contributed towards a high quality learning environment and was strongly correlated with high performance in school.

The ECD teachers unanimously revealed that they were not happy with the administration of ECD programmes. The ECD teachers highlighted that the school heads were not sourcing the required play equipment or repairing the play equipment and were not buying material resources like disinfectants and this compromised the quality of ECD programmes. Inversely, UNICEF's (2006:25) evaluation on Zimbabwe revealed that the organisation of nutrition, health and safety services in ECD were crucial to the management of ECD programmes which brought quality education and care in ECD.

The study revealed that parents were aware that they had an important role to play in the management of ECD programmes. As a result of this awareness, they were part of the decision making, fundraising, furnishing and repairing of the equipment in the ECD learning environment. The current finding concurs with a Nigerian study by Okeke and Ani (2006:14) that showed that the school head spent time negotiating incentives for the teachers and buying and maintaining play equipment with the parents. The parents in the study were very happy with the way the ECD programmes were managed but felt that the toilets could be managed in a better manner. Having discussed the findings on the management and organisation of ECD programmes, the next section discusses the components of quality ECD programmes.

4.9.2 Components of a quality ECD programme

4.9.2.1 Policies in ECD programmes

Responses from the school heads highlighted the fact that ECD policies that standardised and governed ECD programmes were available. They also suggested that some policies like teacher-to-pupil ratio, pupil-to-toilet ratio were not adhered to. The failure to adhere to ECD policies may be because the schools did not have specialised ECD infrastructure as the school heads created room for ECD children in existing structures. It may also be because school administrators were not well versed with ECD policies, let alone adhere to them. The present findings relate to Hyde and Kabiru (2003:12) who argued that while the sub-Saharan countries had ECD policies, they faced challenges with implementation as it required definition of strategies, responsibilities and provision of resources. The school heads also noted that some of the policies, in form of circulars, were not clear on the specifications of how ECD programmes were to be managed which compromised the quality of ECD services provided. However, a Namibian study on ECD policy suggested that policy formulation and clarity led to a wider understanding and management of ECD children's holistic development as it provided guidelines for all stakeholders (Hyde & Kabiru, 2003:35).

It was also revealed in the current study that ECD teachers were familiar with the ECD policies but were unhappy with the fact that the school heads were not adhering to these policies which included the stipulated 1:20 teacher to pupil ratio, the toilet-to-pupil ratio and adequate space per-child indoors and outdoors. The school heads revealed that they had no power to stop the over-enrollment due to the fact that all the children in that geographical area had to be enrolled in the primary school nearest to them. This finding contradicts a Ghanaian study by UNICEF (2000:8) which noted that the availability, adherence and knowledge of policy led to the mobilisation of resources to support ECD children's programmes and

a child-centred method of teaching and learning with integration of care, nutrition, health and safety.

Some of the teachers in the study were not very familiar with ECD policies but those who were familiar with them noted that they were benefiting from the ECD policies and regulations such as the syllabus, for example, which gave them guidelines on the ECD curriculum and content. The present finding concurs with a South African study by Excell and Linington (2011:10) which highlighted that familiarity with the ECD policy led to clarity on guidelines regarding the ECD curriculum. The ECD teachers also noted that some of the ECD policies were not attainable, for example, the yearly medical check-ups because they could not afford to pay the medical bills as the schools were not sponsoring them. The fact that the ECD teachers did not go for constant medical check-ups maybe because, there is generally no follow up in Zimbabwe on policy formulation and implementation. Similarly, a Zimbabwean evaluation by UNICEF (2006:26) noted that there was a discrepancy between the policy's capacity to meet with the expectations of the stakeholders' belief that the policy would meet their expectations, and quality implementation and preparedness of systems in the short and long term.

The parents in the current study revealed that they were not at all familiar with the ECD policies. Inversely, an earlier study on ECD policy familiarity by Hyde and Kabiru (2003:56) in Zanzibar showed that the involvement of parents and the community in the provision of ECD services led to a partnership between the community, religious organisations, individuals and the Ministry of Education.

4.9.2.2 Guidance and counselling in ECD

Findings from the school heads' interviews on guidance and counselling in ECD showed that generally the schools offered guidance and counselling for older primary school children, but minimal for ECD children. The poor provision of guidance and counselling for ECD children maybe because the ECD policy does not include this component which relates to Chireshe's (2006:182) finding that there was no

mandatory School Guidance and Counselling policy in Zimbabwe, leaving individual schools to decide whether to offer guidance and counselling and when and how to offer them. The lack of guidance and counselling in ECD could also be linked to the lack of planning for the school guidance and counselling component in Zimbabwean secondary schools (Chireshe & Venter, 2012:14). A related finding by Okeke and Ani (2006:12) observed that ECD centres had not established guidance and counselling units in Nigerian schools thereby jeopardising the quality of ECD education and care even though guidance and counselling helps children develop socially, physically, psychologically and emotionally.

The school heads also noted that the school counsellors found it difficult to provide guidance and counselling services to ECD children as they did not have the practical skills to guide and counsel the 4-5year-olds. The ECD teachers themselves mentioned that they did not have the skills and training to counsel ECD children. Similarly, Oniye and Durosaro (2009:129) noted that ECD teachers in Nigeria lacked guidance and counselling skills for ECD children. On the contrary, a European study by Miranda (2004:47) showed that ECD teachers had skills in behaviour guidance in which they supported children in rationalising and talking through their conflicts. The lack of guidance and counselling skills is viewed by Chireshe (2006:200) in an earlier Zimbabwean secondary school study as having a negative effect on the SGC services offered. The school heads' lack of guidance and counselling skills maybe because they have not been trained in the area (Chireshe & Mapfumo, 2005:26). The current study further revealed that the lack of guidance and counselling services in ECD was due to the children's limited language which made it difficult for them to express themselves even though they revealed some of these problems through dramatic play and pictures. A Namibian study by Hyde and Kabiru (2003:55) revealed that guidance and counselling in ECD involved the use of activities which utilised pictures, role playing and group interactions to teach social skills associated with emotion, understanding and social problem solving since children have limited language abilities. In this case, the use of art, drama and role play can be used to counsel ECD children to improve the quality of ECD programmes.

The ECD teachers' views indicate that their teacher-led activities and curriculum offered guidance but little or no counselling to ECD children. Hyde and Kabiru's (2003:54) Mali report is supported by the current finding that teacher-led curriculum targeted behaviour guidance of ECD children is dependent on a positive teacher-child relationship. The failure to offer counselling may be due to the fact that ECD teachers were overwhelmed by the large ECD classes they taught. It may also be because they lacked guidance and counselling skills since they had no practical skills training. Parents' views in the study indicated that they did not know whether the ECD teachers/school provided counselling to ECD children, but they believed that their ECD children were enjoying school and coping well socially.

4.9.2.3 Nutrition, health and safety in ECD

Results from the observation checklist generally indicate that the majority of the schools kept a detailed record of the ECD children's health and safety. The results also show that the majority of the schools cleaned the ECD classrooms well and had the necessary disinfectants. However, the minority of the schools under study did not have adequate disinfectants and did not clean their classrooms well and this compromised the quality of ECD programmes provided. Gunhu et al. (2011:139) argued that the inadequacy of sanitary facilities, clean water supply, classroom maintenance and disinfectants in Zimbabwean schools had an impact on the quality of ECD education and care.

It was further observed that the playgrounds were well maintained by the majority of schools while the minority was neglecting the ECD playgrounds and equipment. Half the schools under study was maintaining the ECD toilets and cleaning them well while the other half was not cleaning the toilets well. Unsanitary toilets, according to UNICEF's (2000:26) earlier survey, contributed to poor academic performance and exposure to diseases in Zimbabwe. The checklist further highlights that the minority of the schools offered a balanced diet while the majority did not offer a balanced diet. This could be because the schools did not have cooking facilities since these

schools were never designed for the provision of meals. The lack of meals could also be because the schools did not have adequate human, financial and material resources to manage the ECD meals. However, to cover up for not offering a balanced diet, the majority of the schools in this study held health, safety and nutrition discussions with the parents and the ECD children to empower them with the knowledge of healthy foods. Govindasamy (2010:10), in his South African study, highlighted that imparting knowledge of adequate nutrition was critical for normal brain development, early detection and intervention for disabilities, giving children the best chances for healthy development. Similar arguments on European studies were put forward by Gardner (2007:204) who stated that poor standards and lack of knowledge of health is a significant barrier to ECD children's ability to learn and become healthy productive adults. The observations made also showed that the majority of the schools did health checks of ECD children daily in the morning and this promoted the quality of ECD programmes.

The lack of a certificate of operation from the City Health, specifically for ECD children in the current study, compromised the quality of ECD programmes offered. Govindasamy (2010:40) argued that a certificate of operation for ECD programmes from the South African government promoted quality and that health factors included cleanliness, environmental influences, consideration of children with special needs, nutrition, learning behaviour and the licensing of the ECD programme as stipulated by the government regulations and policies. The school heads' responses to interviews proved that they were trying to promote nutrition, health and safety but the finding on failing to maintain toilets in some schools put the quality of the ECD programmes in these schools in doubt. The poor hygienic state of the toilets, maybe because there was water shortage which is typical in Zimbabwe.

The finding of the present study is consistent with Gunhu et al. (2011:139) in Masvingo who doubted the quality of ECD programmes when they revealed that toilet facilities were inadequate and not well cleaned. Findings of the present study also revealed that the majority of the schools had adequate water while the minority

did not have. Hyde and Kabiru (2003:58) argue that there is an increase in school attendance when water is available in the Tanzanian evaluation. The finding in the present study exposed that ECD children did not have child-sized facilities and did not have adequate personnel to supervise them during routine times, putting the quality of ECD programmes at risk. Studies by Gunhu et al. (2011:140) and Ciumwari (2010) revealed that the heads and the teachers in the Zimbabwean and Kenyan studies respectively were concerned with the non-availability of child-sized facilities and inadequate water.

4.9.2.4 Parental involvement in ECD

Findings on parental involvement showed that parents were sometimes fully involved in the education and care of ECD children through attending parents' meetings, formal and informal consultation days and fundraising and volunteering services for the school. The findings concur with a Zambian study by Thomas and Thomas (2009:30) that revealed that parental involvement included attending workshops and volunteering services and that this created a positive relationship between the school and the parents. Full parental involvement, according to Kwela et al. (2000:49), was associated with academic success in Malawi. An earlier study by Barnett (2004:2) revealed that parental involvement in councils in the US enabled the committee members to understand the ECD processes and that this influenced and educated new parents. In a Kenyan study by OECD (2006:30), constant communication between parents and teachers was associated with more sensitive teacher-to-child and parent-to-child and/or teacher interactions. Furthermore, Barnett (2004:4) revealed that parental involvement in Chicago promoted ECD children's school readiness, academic achievement and led to fewer health problems. Zellman and Perlman (2006:524) also noted that having volunteering parents in Canada helped the schools to function better and to cope with financial challenges.

The present study also revealed that parents were not fully involved in ECD programmes. Poor parental involvement in ECD programmes in the study was associated with the parents' lack of time. ECD programmes were also regarded as a

waste of time as parents saw it as all play, hence the poor participation. Poor parental involvement may be because the schools did not invite parents as resource persons or it may be associated with the parents' negative attitude. The finding of the current study concurs with a Chicago study by Barnett (2004:4) who showed that parents found it difficult to be fully involved in ECD education and care due to their work schedules.

4.9.2.5 Stakeholder partnerships in ECD

The study revealed that the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education was the lead ministry that coordinated ECD programmes. For example, Education Officers in the present study from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education arranged workshops and appraised ECD programmes which promoted the quality of these programmes. A leading ministry in Kenya resulted in ECD teachers enjoying remuneration equivalent to that of primary school teachers and this had a positive impact on the quality of ECD education and care (Ndani & Kimani, 2010:35). A study by Hyde and Kabiru (2003:49) in Kenya showed that the Ministry of Education was responsible for the overall administration, policy and professional guidance, grants for training staff, curriculum development and conducting research and evaluation. The lead ministry in Kenya collaborated with teacher deployment, ensured remuneration equivalent to that of higher grade teachers and coordinated health programmes like immunisations and feeding schemes. On the contrary, the lack of an ECD coordinating ministry in the United States and Ireland led to a duplication of duties resulting in lack of coherence for children and families with a confusing variety of funding streams, operational procedures, regulatory frameworks, staff training and qualifications (Hyde & Kabiru, 2003:50). An earlier study by OECD (2006:48) also highlighted that the absence of a lead ministry in Namibia with sound knowledge of ECD and mobilising agenda for young children, led the Government's Finance Department to pay for children's services from public expenditure which affected the quality of ECD services negatively.

It also emerged from the study that several ministries including the Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Health and Social Welfare contributed positively to the quality of ECD education and care. The Ministry of Health visited the schools for general health checks and offered immunisations to ECD children as well as dealing with all health referred cases by the schools. Kamerman (2006:20) noted that other ministries in Malawi, Senegal, Namibia and Mali such as the Ministries of Health, were responsible for medical services to the school children in collaboration with local communities and education officers. The current study noted that the Ministry of Defence imparted life skills education to ECD children and that the Social Welfare dealt with the general welfare of ECD children. An earlier study on inter-ministerial collaborations by Hyde and Kabiru (2003:42) on Kenya, Namibia, South Africa and Mali, showed that these facilitated policies and actions leading to quality ECD programmes through the support given to families, caregivers and communities. The study also revealed that stakeholder partnerships coordinated at centralised and localised levels facilitated exchanges and a holistic approach to ECD while respecting cultural practices and beliefs that were part of ECD children.

The present study also revealed that the local government gave little or no support to ECD programmes. The lack of support from the local government may be because they did not have the required resources or because they did not realise the importance of ECD programmes. The local government in Kenya supported ECD education through the provision of materials, equipment, furniture and payment of teachers' salaries which motivated the ECD teachers as well as promoting the quality of ECD programmes (Ciumwari, 2010:10).

The study also revealed that NGOs donated toys and books to ECD children. Hyde and Kabiru (2003:35) also highlighted that other partners such as; UNICEF, the Bernard van Leer Foundation, and Save the Children have been supportive of the quality of ECD education and care in Malawi, Zimbabwe, Mali, and Namibia. Having discussed the components of a quality ECD programme, the following section

discusses findings on the qualification and training of ECD personnel in Harare primary schools.

4.9.3 The qualification of ECD personnel

The study revealed that ECD teachers had varied qualifications which had both a positive and a negative impact on the quality of ECD programmes. This implies that there was a wide variation of ECD teacher training, and as a result, in the standards of education and care of ECD children. The variations of qualifications of ECD teachers had an effect on their understanding of their roles and functions and this, in turn, affected their professionalism and the quality of ECD education and care. The variation of ECD teacher training may be because the ECD policy states that the permanent secretary will determine, from time to time, the minimum level of ECD teacher qualification (Statutory Instrument 106 of 2005). The findings of the study concurs with Kamerman's (2006:15) which revealed that there was wide variation in state regulations specifying the qualifications of ECD teachers in Mali and this resulted in the variation of ECD teachers with confused roles. Some views from the study were that the higher the qualification, the higher the teacher efficiency and the higher the quality of ECD programmes. The observations made revealed that activities offered by the ECD teachers showed ECD specialisation as the activities were developmentally and age-appropriate. The present finding of the study supports Barnett's (2004:5) Chicago study which proved that good staff training, as a quality indicator, showed that ECD children who had highly qualified personnel had higher educational and social outcomes as opposed to the ECD children whose teachers were para-professionals and showed low educational and social outcomes.

The study revealed that the school heads felt that they were not specialists in the ECD area and thus felt helpless in dealing with ECD children. The school heads' lack of specialisation affected their mentoring of trainee and newly qualified teachers. The lack of specialisation also affected their understanding of the development of the ECD children and therefore the quality of ECD education was compromised. The school heads' lack of ECD specialisation in the present study concurs with Ackerman

and Barnett's (2009:332) British study which concluded that ECD children whose curriculum and teaching was managed by unqualified personnel have been found to be less sociable, to exhibit less developed use of language and to perform at a lower level on cognitive tasks than children who were cared for by highly qualified teachers.

The study further revealed that training alone does not bring competence and professionalism, but passion and love for ECD children also contributes highly to the quality of ECD programmes. The study noted that, despite the ECD teachers' training, some teachers' professionalism did not match up to ECD curriculum implementation as they did not get on well with the parents and ECD children. The government's lack of employment, college policies on ECD teacher training and lack of interest in teaching ECD children on the teachers' part were blamed for the ECD teachers' lack of professionalism. The current sentiment supports Kathyanga's (2011:18) findings on ECD policies in Malawi that revealed that in Malawi there were minimal pre-requisites for becoming a caregiver. An earlier study by Hyde and Kabiru (2003) also revealed that it was ultimately the role of the government to enforce ECD policies and legislature that guaranteed quality education in relation to teacher qualification.

The ECD teachers in the study also revealed that they were upgrading their qualifications which meant that all the teachers were willing to learn and educate others, especially the school heads, parents and the ECD children. The upgrading of qualifications and willingness to learn was able to influence the quality of ECD programmes positively. Similarly, a study by Hyde and Kabiru (2003:55) on Zanzibar noted that ECD teachers who sought professional development were highly motivated and had the need for achievements. The present finding further confirms UNICEF's (2000:30) Malawian survey that teacher education developed teaching methods and skills that took the understanding of how children learnt into account. The upgrading of ECD qualifications was also reported in South Africa by

Govindasamy (2010:62) who noted that many ECD teachers with lower qualifications were studying to upgrade their knowledge of ECD children.

The school heads in the present study explained that well trained ECD personnel at their schools had the ability to impart knowledge to school heads, parents and ECD children. The finding of the present study supports Espinosa's (2002) finding which stated that well trained ECD teachers of the US communicated respect for families and warmth for children and this, in turn, affected the ECD children's self-conceptions leading to quality education and care.

The ECD teachers in the study who had a BEd (ECD) showed that they had improved their knowledge of evaluation of ECD children's milestones when compared to the previous knowledge they had when they only had a certificate or Diploma in ECD. Inversely, Miranda's (2004:7) British study revealed that ECD teachers from European countries had little knowledge of how children learnt as they were not highly qualified. The ability of ECD teachers in the present study to evaluate their abilities is contrary to observations of Guinea and India which found out that ECD teachers were poorly trained in evaluation techniques and the reality was far from evaluation procedures recommended by official programmes (UNICEF, 2000:10).

Parents in the study noted that their ECD teachers were highly professional and qualified as could be seen by the ECD children's ability to recall with comprehension what they had been taught and to behave in a socially acceptable manner. The findings of the present study confirms an earlier South African study by Govindasamy (2010:62) who noted that teachers who were highly qualified provided individual and group responsive learning to ECD children and parents and thus promoted quality ECD education and care. The parents in the study felt that they needed the ECD teachers to educate them on how they could teach ECD children as a spill-over from the school. This confirms Espinosa's (2002:8) finding that US ECD teachers had frequent meaningful and educative interactions with children, parents

and school heads as they engaged them in meaningful conversation which helped children expand their knowledge.

The parents in the study also expressed ignorance of ECD teacher qualifications as they noted that they did not understand why ECD children were always playing. This lack of knowledge from the ECD parents of levels of teacher qualifications may be because they never asked for that information. The parents in the study were willing to be taught how ECD children learn and appreciated it when ECD teachers informed them about the different curriculum issues in ECD. The education of the parents in the study on ECD issues was associated with high linkage between school and home policies and this, in turn, influenced the quality of ECD programmes positively. Similarly, Govindasamy's (2010:45) study noted that trained ECD teachers in South Africa knew how to deal with and train ECD children and parents and this promoted quality education and care.

The next section discusses the teaching methods used in ECD.

4.9.4 Teaching methods used in ECD

The study revealed that all the schools in the study used drama/role play in teaching ECD children and the children showed enjoyment while learning morals and good behaviour. The play-way method of teaching was associated with problem solving and creativeness of ECD children. The current findings relate to Johansson and Pramling-Samuelsson's (2009:60) Swedish study that revealed that ECD children who learnt through play in goal directed ECD classrooms developed holistically. Similarly, Excell and Linington (2011:10) concluded that ECD children of South African origin who were actively involved in drama and role play were advanced in intellectual, social and emotional development and had the ability to think inventively.

The study also revealed that teaching in ECD was child-centred, developmentally appropriate and play-way in nature. The present finding of the study supports

Ailwood's (2003:289) Australian finding which proved that play had positive effects on children's cognitive development, learning, peer relationships and emotional well-being.

The study also established that all schools were using rhymes and songs to teach ECD children. The researcher noted that the songs and rhymes used involved adding, subtraction, colours, months of the year, action songs and other concepts. The finding of the current study confirms earlier British findings by Miranda (2004:61) who revealed that the use of songs, for example, had been demonstrated to facilitate the development of literacy skills in children and increased socialisation. While the researcher in this study noted that the ECD teachers used the project method, the ECD teachers were not even aware that they were using it. The lack of knowledge on the project method confirms Ailwood's (2003:45) opinion that ECD teachers in Australia lacked confidence, knowledge and understanding of the project method, let alone implement it. An earlier Tanzanian study by Kwela et al. (2000) also highlighted that the use of play, for example, through the project and/or drama method, supported the conceptual development of colours, alphabet, numbers, size, shapes, texture, ratio, order, direction, time and social awareness among ECD children. The current research proved that none of the ECD teachers in this study used the lecture method. This may be because all the teachers had ECD specialisation of some sort. It was further revealed that the lecture method was not user-friendly for ECD children as they learn best when interacting with content and media.

A minority of the school heads and parents in the present study viewed the play-way method of teaching ECD children as a waste of time. This may be because the parents and the school heads were not ECD specialists. The finding concurs with Miranda's (2004:61) findings in Britain that parents had become poor in song and hence ECD teachers promoted it as a teaching method in ECD education and care.

The ECD teachers in the present study noted that the school heads insisted that the ECD teachers follow a rigid timetable similar to that of the upper grades with more learning and less play. The ECD teachers in the study revealed that they displayed the timetable given to them by the head but they followed their own specialised ECD timetables which they kept hidden. These school heads' perspective is contrary to the opinion of Harper (2011:69) who noted that, by engaging children in play, the ECD children develop problem solving skills.

The study also revealed that ECD teachers' professionalism and level of training was questioned due to their use of the play-way method of teaching. However, a Swedish study by Johansson and Pramling-Samuelsson (2006:62) observed that ECD children who had received an enriched play-oriented early childhood programme had higher IQs at age five than did the comparable group who did not get play-oriented programmes. The next section discusses the findings on the availability of resources in ECD.

4.9.5 Resources in ECD

4.9.5.1 Financial resources in ECD

The study revealed that the schools had limited financial resources. The finding of the present study supports Hyde and Kabiru's (2003:58) report that the majority of African governments had no financial allocation for ECD children but that the parents and the communities supported the ECD programmes financially. The issue of limited financial resources is related to Hyde and Kabiru's (2003:58) observation that funding of ECD programmes in African countries was limited and this was one major constraint limiting the quality of ECD programmes. The fact that the schools were from both high and low density areas made no difference to the inadequacy of financial resources. Furthermore, the present findings of the study revealed that the geographical context had no effect on the inadequacy or adequacy of financial resources. Inversely, the study by Ratumoi and Too (2012:3) revealed that ECD classes in geographical areas of high economic income were usually adequately

funded and were therefore of a high quality that had positive social, intellectual, emotional and physical outcomes for ECD children in Kenya.

Results of the study highlighted that parents were the main source of financial resources through tuition fees, levies and fundraising projects. The fact that parents were the main source of funding for ECD programmes was in compliance with Statutory Instrument 106 of 2005 and Nziramasanga's (1999:30) report that parents were responsible for the construction of ECD infrastructure and the running of ECD programmes. A related study by Ratumoi and Too (2012:2) revealed that commitment to ECD funding was multifaceted; in some countries it may have been market-oriented implying that parents paid the tuition while, on the other hand, it may have been state responsibility. The findings of the present study further revealed that since parents were the source of funding in ECD, financial resources for ECD programmes were scarce due to economic meltdown and this, in turn, compromised the quality of ECD programmes. The study also highlighted that the fees charged by the government were very low and that, even then, parents were not paying the tuition fees. Results of the study noted that, even though the school administration and the SDCs ensured that parents paid the little levy and tuition timeously, they could not make decisions on the money collected since they had to wait for authorisation from the responsible authorities to use the money.

The ECD teachers in the study revealed that it did not matter whether the financial resources were adequate or inadequate because the school heads did not buy the required resources for ECD education and care. Similarly, Levin and Schwartz (2007:13) noted that one reason why ECD funding was little understood was because it was far from homogeneous and the authorities' understanding was limited. The parents in the study revealed that because all what ECD children did was play, there was no need to spend money on them and the scarce financial resources that were available were instead spent on more important things like payment of bills, teachers' incentives, buying books and material resources for examination-oriented grades. An earlier Tanzanian report by Hyde and Kabiru

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(2003:62) stated that response to costs in ECD were influenced by the characteristics of facilities and their size as well as the administrators' perception of ECD programmes' financial needs.

4.9.5.2 Human resources in ECD

The study revealed that the majority of the school heads were generally of the view that the schools had adequate human resources in ECD even though they over-enrolled the ECD children from the required ratio of 1:20. The fact that the school heads thought the human resources were adequate maybe because they were not well versed with the ECD policies' stipulations of the teacher-to-pupil ratio. It may also be because the school heads had to serve all the clients in the geographical area and thus could not do anything about numbers enrolled or because the general trend in the schools was that all class sizes were large and hence it was felt that the ECD class size was no exception. The fact that the school heads felt that the human resources were adequate may also be because they had personal financial gains from desperate parents looking for vacancies hence the turning of the blind eye to the teacher to pupil ratio policy. It may also be because the school heads thought that it was all play and no learning and thus there was no need for more personnel in the ECD classroom. However, the majority of the ECD teachers in the study felt overworked as their class sizes were above the 1:20 teacher pupil ratio. The ECD teachers' feeling of being overworked may have emanated from the fact that they felt that the school heads were just fundraising which caused the over-enrollment. The over-enrollment affected the quality of supervision of learning activities and toilet training. Ndani and Kimani's (2010:34) Kenyan study established that unmanageable pupil enrollment contributed towards teacher attrition and hence affected the quality of ECD education and care. Similarly, a Namibian finding by UNICEF (2000:11) revealed that understaffing in ECD affected the supervision of learning activities, hand-washing supervision, and toilet training which affected the quality of education and care.

The study further revealed that the ECD teachers in the study were overworked, short-staffed and did not have assistants in their ECD classes who are a requirement from the Government ECD policies and regulations. The lack of assistant teachers may be because the Zimbabwean government does not have adequate funding for these assistant teachers. It may also be because the school administrators have never followed up with the Ministry of Education about the assistant teacher requirement. The ECD teachers in the study suspected that the over-enrollment by their leadership had some corruption linkages and they felt strongly that it affected the quality of individualised attention given to the ECD children. Azzi-Lessing's (2009:10) Canadian and US studies highlighted that strong pedagogical leadership and competent human resources management and subordinate trust of leadership at ECD centres was important for supporting, nurturing and developing the staff team and the reflective qualities known to improve the quality of ECD programmes.

The study revealed that the minority of the school heads abided by the required teacher-to-pupil ratio and they understood the need for adequate personnel. The ECD teachers' individual attention and sensitivity to the needs of the ECD children was efficiently and effectively done. Currie (2001:232) revealed that child care facilities with structures measured by safer, cleaner and more stimulating environments, better child-staff ratios in terms of classroom process and caregivers who were sensitive to children, provided a more cognitively stimulating care in Canada.

Results from the study also revealed that the majority of the ECD teachers felt de-motivated by the school heads' attitude and lack of support, coupled by the over-enrollment of ECD children. This affected their service delivery negatively and consequently the quality of ECD programmes. However, Korjenvitch and Dunifon (2010:13) showed that good working conditions motivated ECD personnel in the US and this, in turn, improved the quality of ECD programmes. The present findings also revealed that parents in the study felt that the schools had adequate human resources as the ECD teachers' duty was only to play with the ECD children. An

earlier study by Sussman and Gilman (2007:9) also highlighted that ECD teachers in Sweden were undervalued by the parents and the community. Ndani and Kimani's (2010:35) Malawian study also noted that parents supported unfriendly working conditions for ECD teachers.

4.9.5.3 Material resources in ECD

The observation checklist results from the present study showed that the majority of schools under study had child-sized furniture. Inversely a Zimbabwean study by Gunhu et al. (2011:138) noted that the quality of ECD education and care in Masvingo schools was affected as children were exposed to some related infections because of the unavailability of adequate and age-appropriate furniture and proper resting places.

The observation results also indicated that the majority of the schools had well ventilated ECD rooms. Poorly ventilated rooms could be caused by the conversion of a garage or a storeroom for ECD classrooms as indicated during the interviews. This had a negative impact on the quality of ECD programmes. A Malawian study by Kwela et al. (2000:49) revealed that lack of proper infrastructure, toilets and other material resources for ECD children jeopardised ECD children's safety. This could be because the schools accommodated the ECD children in the infant grades' (grades one to three) playground. Findings also revealed that, in a minority of the schools, ECD play equipment was locked up and was only supplied to the children under the watchful eye of the ECD teachers.

It also emerged from the study that the schools did not have adequate play equipment for grades one to three, since in most schools they were meant to be sharing the play equipment with ECD children. The observations also revealed that only a minority of schools under study had child-sized wash basins. Bauer (2010:91) noted that, while countries had made strides in establishing programme quality and enforcing these standards while increasing professional development opportunities,

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progress in building infrastructure and the acquisition of material resources remained largely unaddressed.

The school heads revealed that schools did not have adequate and age-appropriate material resources due to lack of adequate funding. Ackerman and Barnett (2009:335) argued that, in Colorado, the quality of ECD programmes for children of poor backgrounds was defined in terms of standards and adequacy of material resources to encourage cognitive and language development. The present finding of the study concurs with the Kenyan findings by Ciumwari (2010:10) who noted that teaching materials in ECD centres were not always available and thus learning was done rather by saying than by doing. The study further revealed that the schools did not have the capacity to furnish the ECD classrooms with age-appropriate and adequate material resources. The ECD teachers in the study, however, argued that the school heads were not forthcoming in purchasing age-appropriate and adequate play equipment for ECD children. The finding of the present study confirms findings by Anderson et al. (2003:40) who showed that school heads in Canada did not buy the required material resources due to lack of knowledge of ECD children's learning requirements. The ECD teachers in the study revealed that they were forced to ask for donations of material resources such as toys, crayons, paints and paper from the parents to cope with the shortage of material resources.

The study also revealed that the only things that were child-sized were the tables and chairs and that the rest of the play equipment was not child-sized. An earlier study by Sussman and Gillman (2007:9) in Sweden observed that the physical environment and material resources strongly correlated with student achievement and teacher retention and hence the availability of appropriate furniture was a prerequisite of quality ECD education. Currie (2001:222) also reported that adequate and age-appropriate infrastructure such as sinks, mirrors, tables and chairs had lasting effects on ECD children in Canada.

The ECD teachers in the study stated that they did not have reference books, resources or story books and had to buy their own even though it was the schools' responsibility. Similarly, Kwela et al. (2000:48) highlighted that, ECD teachers in Tanzania had no ECD syllabus as well as teaching materials. The availability of resource books influenced the quality of ECD programmes positively as the ECD teachers had a variety of activities to choose from the resource books. The ECD teachers in the study also noted that they improvised story books so that they would ensure that their children were exposed to stories. An exposure to story books increased the ECD children's language and visual literacy.

Parents in the study shared mixed views on the availability and adequacy of material resources in ECD. Some noted that since they always donated toys at the ECD teachers' request, they felt that the material resources were adequate. However, some felt that material resources were not adequate as not all parents were able to donate the material resources required by the ECD teachers and children. Sussman and Gillman (2007:7) found that, in Sweden, while the ECD phase continued expanding and experiencing a new phase of educationally-oriented growth, the field remained fragmented and insufficiently materially resourced and this, in turn, affected the quality of ECD education and care negatively.

4.10 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the results from the study have been presented and discussed in the context of the sub-research questions. The main findings from observations and in-depth interviews on the management and organisation of ECD programmes, components of a quality ECD programme, personnel qualification, teaching methods and resource availability in ECD were revealed and discussed. In the next chapter a summary of the findings of the study is given, conclusions drawn from the findings are presented and recommendations are made.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the study was to establish the quality of ECD programmes in Harare primary schools in Zimbabwe. This chapter presents a summary of the findings of the study on each sub-research question, the conclusion and recommendations as well as suggestions for the improvement of the quality of ECD programmes. Suggestions for future studies are also presented. The summary of the findings of the study is presented first.

5.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

5.2.1 Management and organisation of ECD programmes

The study revealed that the majority of ECD play areas were well managed. It also emerged from the study that the school heads were not familiar with their duties in relation to ECD programmes due to a lack of specialisation in ECD.

It was also highlighted in the study that the delegation of duties to teachers-in-charge and parents promoted quality ECD programmes. However, school heads felt incompetent to promote quality ECD programmes due to a lack of ECD specialisation. They expressed their need for constant training to boost their expertise in ECD management. This lack of specialisation pointed to a lack of management support as highlighted by the ECD teachers in terms of prioritisation of resource allocation in ECD and adherence to ECD policies such as teacher-to-pupil ratio.

A minority of the ECD teachers felt that the school heads were not offering them support and incentives which dampened their motivation and, consequently,

compromised the quality of ECD programmes. The study further revealed that the ECD teachers were not happy with the way the school heads managed the ECD programmes. The teachers in the study also revealed that ECD children did not get adequate resources from school heads. Participating parents agreed that ECD management was good although they felt that management of the toilets could be improved. The ECD teachers stated that they were competent in ECD class management as was shown by the state of the play areas and equipment, and the children's use of them. Having completed the summary of findings of the study on the administration and organisation of ECD programmes, the next section summarises the components of quality ECD programmes.

5.2.2 Components of quality ECD programmes

5.2.2.1 ECD Policies

The ECD policies, like the syllabus, offered clear guidelines on the ECD curriculum and implementation and the study revealed that the schools had ECD policies that governed and standardised the quality of ECD programmes. However, the ECD teachers noted that, while the policies, such as the teacher-to-pupil ratio, were available, they were not being adhered to.

The study also revealed that some ECD policies, such as health check-ups, were unattainable and there was no follow-up from the school heads, probably because they lacked knowledge about this policy. The fact that ECD teachers did not go for health check-ups compromised the quality of ECD programmes. It was also found that parents were not familiar with the specifications of ECD policies. The next sub-section summarises the study's findings on the quality of guidance and counselling in ECD.

5.2.2.2 Guidance and counselling in ECD

It was revealed in the study that there was little or no guidance and counselling for ECD children. This compromised the quality of ECD programmes as guidance and

counselling is necessary for holistic development. It emerged from the study that neither the counsellors, the school heads nor the ECD teachers had the required skills to guide and counsel ECD children since this age group had limited language skills. However, all the school heads and teachers noted that they gave ECD children and their parents some form of comfort and advice if the need arose. Parents in the study admitted that they had little or no knowledge of whether the school had guidance and counselling sessions for ECD children. The parents noted that there were some indications that some form of guidance was taking place as evidenced by what they could observe from the children's positive behaviour. The next sub-section summarises the study's findings on the quality of nutrition, health and safety in ECD.

5.2.2.3 Nutrition, health and safety in ECD

Observations made by the researcher revealed that the majority of the schools had health, nutrition and safety record books, held nutrition, health and safety discussions and had well ventilated rooms and that these factors promoted the quality of ECD programmes. The results also revealed that the majority of the schools under study cleaned their rooms well and the playgrounds were well maintained. However, the minority of the schools had poorly cleaned playgrounds and rooms.

It also emerged from the study that all the participating schools had a certificate of operation from the City Council for the grades one to seven but not specifically for ECD children. However, not all the schools went through the process of registering for the enrollment of three to six-year-olds which, according to the policy, has certain expectations and specifications. Therefore the ECD programme and certificate of operation were not as per expected standards.

The majority of the schools held nutrition, health and safety discussions with parents and children which manifested in the way the children played safely. The study also revealed that only half the toilets were well cleaned which meant that, for the other half who did not keep the toilets clean, the ECD programmes could be stopped due

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to the unhealthy status of the toilets. The minority of the schools offered a balanced diet while the majority did not due to the fact that the ECD programmes in those schools were half-day and did not offer any meals. To cater for not offering a balanced diet, the school heads facilitated nutrition, health and safety discussions for the parents and ECD children so that they could be aware of and eat healthy foods at home.

The study revealed that the majority of schools kept the first aid kit in the sports director's office. The ECD teachers, however, cited that sometimes the sports director was not available. The ECD teachers also noted that they were not trained in first aid and hence were limited in dealing with hurt children. The majority of ECD teachers did health checks as observed. The study also revealed that the majority of the schools had the required disinfectants. In the next sub-section, the summary of the findings of the quality of parental involvement in ECD is presented.

5.2.2.4 Parental involvement in ECD

Views expressed in the study on parental involvement in ECD were mixed. Firstly, it emerged that parental involvement was fairly good as parents attended meetings, raised funds and paid tuition fees for their children. Parents also attended consultation days and volunteered services such as toy-making and chart-making in the school. This promoted the quality of ECD programmes. On the other hand, there were parents who were not fully involved as they did not volunteer services or donate toys and stationery as requested by the school. This compromised the quality of ECD programmes. The following sub-section presents the summary of the study's results on the quality of stakeholder partnerships in ECD programmes.

5.2.2.5 Stakeholder partnerships in ECD

The study revealed that the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education was the lead ministry in ECD programmes. This promoted collaboration with other ministries and resultantly holistic development and quality ECD education and care. The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education staff developed the ECD teachers and

school heads and appraised the ECD programmes. The lead ministry linked the ECD programmes with donor communities who donated toys and books. The lead ministry, however, presented challenges to the ECD programmes by giving schools directives to teach writing.

It also emerged from the study that the Ministry of Defence was cited for offering life skills education in safety and security for ECD children. The Ministry of Health was acknowledged for offering health education and other services such as immunisations and the Ministry of Social Welfare offered social services. It also emerged from the study that the local government failed to offer assistance in building infrastructure for ECD programmes. Having presented the components of a quality ECD programme, the next section summarises the study's findings on personnel qualification in ECD.

5.2.3 The level of ECD personnel qualification

It emerged from the study that the ECD teacher training was varied. It was believed that the higher the qualification, the more professional and competent the teacher was in the study. It was revealed that ECD teachers with degrees in ECD were highly professional as shown by the quality of their work and their sensitivity to ECD children's needs. The activities offered by these teachers were regarded as developmentally appropriate. It was further revealed that even though the teachers were highly qualified, some were not performing as per expected standards and the blame was placed on teachers' attitudes, government's inability to generate jobs and teacher training colleges' policies on ECD teacher training. It emerged from the study that negative attitudes of some of the teachers may have been caused by lack of interest in teaching. This, in turn, affected the quality of ECD programmes negatively.

School heads pointed out that their lack of specialisation in ECD rendered them incompetent in dealing with ECD children, interpreting the ECD curriculum and mentoring newly qualified ECD teachers. However, they appreciated the staff

development workshops offered by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education which they felt helped them to cope. The study also highlighted that the school heads appreciated the help they got from ECD specialist teachers.

The majority of the parents felt incompetent in helping ECD children. The parents in the study appreciated the ECD teachers' competence and professionalism in handling ECD children. The parents in the study felt that they would appreciate education from the ECD teachers so that they could reinforce what the schools taught at their homes. The study also showed that all the activities offered for the ECD children were age-appropriate, well-paced and developmentally appropriate. The kinds of activities were, however, not understood by some school heads and parents who felt that the teachers were wasting time as they played with, rather than taught the children. As a result, the school heads and parents doubted the ECD teachers' level of qualification and professionalism. The school heads' misunderstanding of the play-way method of teaching in ECD led some of the ECD teachers to use an ECD user friendly timetable, while displaying the common school timetable that they were required to use. In the following section, a summary of the teaching methods used in ECD is presented.

5.2.4 The teaching methodology in ECD

The study revealed that all the schools in the study used the play-way methods of teaching which included drama and/or role play. The play-way method of teaching was associated with problem solving and creativeness. The study also established that the methods used were child-centred and developmentally appropriate. The study also revealed that songs, rhymes and dance were used for teaching ECD children and that these helped to develop concepts such as subtraction, addition and colours, among others. The use of song was correlated with literacy skills and increased socialisation. It also emerged from the study that the project method was used to teach ECD children even though the ECD teachers found it difficult to implement. The ECD teachers in the study unanimously agreed that the lecture method was not suitable for ECD children's teaching as it was not child-friendly.

The minority of the school heads and parents in the study viewed the use of play-way methods of teaching ECD children as a waste of time. As a result, the school heads insisted that the ECD teachers use a rigid timetable similar to the one used for upper grades. The ECD teachers' professionalism and level of qualification was questioned due to their use of play-way methods of teaching by some school heads and parents in the study. The following section presents a summary of findings of the study on the availability of resources in ECD.

5.2.5 Resources availability in ECD

5.2.5.1 Financial resources in ECD

The study revealed that the schools had inadequate financial resources. As a result of this, the school administration and the SDC prioritised the exam-oriented classes in their provision of resources.

The fact that the schools were from low and high density localities made no difference to the adequacy or inadequacy of financial resources in ECD. The study also revealed that parents were the main source of funding through payment of tuition fees and fundraising. Since parents were struggling financially, funding was scarce and some parents did not manage to pay their tuition fees at all even though the schools made a follow-up regarding the payment of the fees. This meant that the financial resources for ECD classes were inadequate. In addition; the school heads could not disburse the finances without the consent of the responsible authority. In the following sub-section, a summary of the material resources in ECD is presented.

5.2.5.2 Material resources in ECD

The study revealed that while the majority of the schools under study had child-sized furniture and well ventilated ECD rooms, they did not have adequate child-sized play equipment. The findings also showed that a minority of the schools had ECD play equipment that was locked up and was only unlocked when ECD children had to go and play under the watchful eye of the ECD teachers. The study further established that the majority of the schools did not have child-sized wash basins.

The study revealed that, because the schools did not have adequate funding, the ECD teachers had to ask for donations from ECD parents for resources such as crayons and dolls. The ECD teachers revealed that they did not have reference books and resource books and had to buy their own even though this was supposed to be the schools' responsibility. The resource books influenced the ECD programmes positively as the teachers could give the children a variety of activities. The ECD teachers also improvised story books and this exposed the children to stories which increased the children's language and literacy.

Parents in the study had mixed views on the availability of material resources. Some parents noted that since they donated toys and stationery for ECD children, the material resources were adequate. However, some argued that the material resources were not adequate as not all parents were able to donate toys and resources and that this affected the quality of ECD programmes negatively. The following section presents a summary of findings of the study on the adequacy of human resources in ECD.

5.2.5.3 Human resources in ECD

The study revealed that, generally, the school heads were of the view that the schools had adequate human resources even though they over-enrolled the numbers of ECD children. The over-enrollment compromised the quality of ECD programmes negatively since the ECD teachers did not give individualised assistance and

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supervision of sanitary activities. The study also showed that only the minority of the schools had the required teacher-to-pupil ratio hence the human resources for these schools were adequate. The study further revealed that the ECD teachers did not have assistant ECD teachers as per the ECD policy requirement. The ECD teachers felt that the human resources were inadequate as they were overworked, understaffed and the class sizes were extremely large.

Some parents and school heads in the study thought that the numbers of ECD teachers were adequate since their duty was only to play and not do any teaching to ECD children. Some parents, however, were not sure whether the human resources were adequate or inadequate. Some parents noted that the human resources in terms of grounds attendants and cleaners were inadequate as observed from the unhygienic and unsafe state of the toilets and playgrounds. Having finished presenting the summary of the findings of the study the following section presents the conclusion of the study.

5.3 CONCLUSION

The purpose of the study was to establish the quality of ECD programmes in Harare primary schools in Zimbabwe. On the basis of the findings of this study, it can be concluded that ECD programmes in Harare primary schools have a number of shortcomings that compromise the quality of ECD programmes. The management, administrator competence and support of ECD programmes have been found to be of poor quality and not up to standard. It can also be concluded that, due to this, the quality of ECD components such as policies, guidance and counselling, stakeholder involvement, parental involvement and nutrition, health and safety was compromised. The ECD policies lacked clarity and guidance and counselling for ECD children was minimal and these affected the management of ECD programmes negatively. Stakeholder and parental involvement was minimal and this compromised the collaboration of ECD programmes. The nutrition, health and safety status of the ECD programmes was not up to standard and this made the children vulnerable to ill-health and injuries which, consequently, compromised the quality of ECD

programmes. It can also be concluded from the study that the human, material and financial resources in ECD programmes were inadequate and that these deficiencies affected the quality of ECD education and care negatively. Because personnel qualification in ECD was varied, the influence on quality was on a continuum from very poor to excellent. It can also be concluded that the teaching methods in the ECD programmes were child-centred and play-way in nature and this promoted the quality of ECD programmes. The following section presents the contribution of the study.

5.4 CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

In spite of the limitations outlined in chapter 1, this study made a significant contribution by generating evidence on the quality of ECD programmes. It has highlighted the strengths and weaknesses of the different aspects of ECD programmes. This information will be useful in the review of the quality of ECD programmes towards making it an effective context for the holistic development of ECD children. The quality ECD model that has been proposed can be adopted for use in other ECD programmes. The next section presents the recommendations of the study.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

ECD education and care is one of the most significant aspects of child development and all the participants in the ECD programmes play an important role in providing the context in which the ECD children can develop holistically. Based on the findings outlined in section 5.2 and the findings from literature, the researcher would like to make a number of recommendations as suggestions for the improvement of the quality of ECD programmes. The researcher makes the following recommendations with regards to, firstly, policy and, secondly, the practice of ECD programmes.

5.5.1 Policy

It is recommended that having a clear policy on all the aspects of ECD programmes, the provision of guidance and counselling in ECD, the promotion of quality nutrition, health and safety in ECD, parental involvement and stakeholder involvement in ECD, relevant qualification of ECD personnel and the provision of material, financial and human resources by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education would improve the quality of ECD programmes.

The quality of ECD programmes would also improve by having a policy that specifies

a) the service providers, how the services may be offered and when the services may be offered;

b) practical training of guidance and counselling skills of ECD teachers, school counsellors and school heads by the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education in liaison with the teacher training colleges and universities;

c) resource allocation to ECD programmes; and

d) the process of reprimanding schools that are not implementing the ECD policies.

Wider consultation among school heads, teachers, parents and other stakeholders would improve adherence to the ECD policy. The wider consultation would produce better results through holding awareness campaigns for all stakeholders, familiarising them with ECD policies and their implementation.

The following section presents recommendations that may help improve practice in ECD.

5.5.2 Practice

5.5.2.1 Management and administration of ECD programmes

Having quality management and organisation of ECD programmes would improve the quality of ECD programmes. The quality of ECD programmes would be enhanced by

a) training of all stakeholders on ECD management and organisation which would bring about a better understanding of ECD programmes;

b) the existence of a policy with explicit directions of how to manage ECD programmes and the guidance of school heads by the expectations in ECD policy administration;

c) support and motivation offered by administrators to ECD teachers and the ECD programmes through strict adherence to ECD policies;

d) planning and furnishing of the ECD play areas more effectively;

e) carefully structured administrative procedures in which the school heads are guided in management; and

f) wider consultation among school heads, teachers, parents and other stakeholders which would result in ownership of the programme.

In the following section, recommendations on the components of a quality ECD programme are presented.

5.5.2.2 Components of a quality ECD programmes

5.5.2.2.1 Guidance and counselling in ECD

The quality of ECD programmes would be promoted by mounting staff-development workshops on practical skills training in guidance and counselling of ECD children for ECD teachers, school heads and counsellors.

5.5.2.2.2 Nutrition, health and safety in ECD

The quality of ECD programmes would be improved by

a) training all ECD teachers in first aid and providing a first aid kit in all ECD classrooms;

b) following up on toilet and playground maintenance;

c) having specially accredited certificates of operation from the City Council for ECD children as per Statutory Instrument 106 of 2005; and

d) establishing quality nutritious ECD feeding programmes that promote a holistic development of ECD children.

5.5.2.2.3 Parental involvement in ECD

The quality of ECD programmes would be promoted by
      a) encouraging parents to volunteer their services;
      b) inviting parents as resource persons when teaching certain concepts; and
      c) holding awareness campaigns for parents so that they see the value of their involvement.

5.5.2.2.4 Stakeholder partnerships in ECD

The quality of ECD programmes would be improved by
      a) engaging highly trained personnel in ECD in the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education as the ECD specialists would give proper instructions pertaining to ECD children;
      b) carrying out appraisals of ECD programmes by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education and following up whether the suggestions for improvement of ECD programmes have been taken up and, if not, close down the ECD programmes that are not matching the ECD quality standards; and
      c) serious advocacy by ECD teachers and school heads to NGOs and the local government for more support and innovative programmes that promote all round development of ECD children.

The following section presents recommendations on improving personnel qualification in ECD.

5.5.2.3 Personnel qualification in ECD

The quality of ECD programmes would be promoted by
      a) having staff development workshops for the school administration on ECD curriculum issues and their implementation;
      b) mounting workshops on mentorship and assessment of ECD teachers for teachers-in-charge and school heads by teachers' colleges and universities; and
      c) training of ECD teachers.

In the following section, recommendations on improving teaching methods used in ECD are presented.

5.5.2.4 Teaching methods used in ECD

The quality of ECD programmes would be enhanced by mounting awareness campaigns on the teaching methods used in ECD for school heads, teachers and parents. The next section presents recommendations on suggestions that can improve resource adequacy in ECD.

5.5.3 Resources in ECD

5.5.3.1 Financial resources in ECD

The quality of ECD programmes would be enhanced by
- a) the inclusion of ECD children's education needs in the national budget allocation by the government as is done for older children;
- b) training parents of ECD children in money-making projects which would enable them to pay the fees timeously since they are the main source of funding;
- c) giving the school administrators autonomy to make decisions on money usage by the responsible authorities while accountability of these financial resources is emphasised by the responsible authorities; and
- d) charging reasonable tuition fees and following up the payment of fees by the Zimbabwean Government.

5.5.3.2 Material resources in ECD

The quality of ECD programmes would be improved by the prioritisation of material resource allocation by the school heads for ECD children and budgeting for and buying the teachers' resource books by the schools. Encouraging parents and other stakeholders to donate materials could also improve the material situation.

5.5.3.3 Human resources in ECD

The quality of ECD programmes would improve if schools had adequate numbers of ECD teachers.

5.6 THE QUALITY ECD PROGRAMMES MODEL

To facilitate the implementation of recommendations given above, a quality ECD programme model is proposed below. This model is grounded in the Ecological theory and the provision of quality ECD programmes under the following quality indicators: management and organisation, teaching methodology, personnel qualification, resource availability, and components of quality in ECD. The model is inspired by Bronfernbrenner's ecological systems theory where the ECD child's quality development is influenced by the effective partnership and collaboration between the micro-systems (Woolfolk, 2010:127) as referred to in section 1.4. The theory posits that people are embedded in the multiple ecological settings and the individual both affects and is affected by the environment (Pianta & Rimm-Kaufman, 2006:492). The ECD child is thus, influenced by and influences the quality of teaching and learning. The different elements of the model are interlinked as reflected in the diagram and they are based on effective communication and partnerships among all stakeholders. The anchor for all activities of this model is collaboration and relationships among stakeholders who constitute the ecology in promotion of quality ECD programmes.

Figure 5:1 A Proposed T. Chikutuma (2013) Model of Quality ECD Programmes
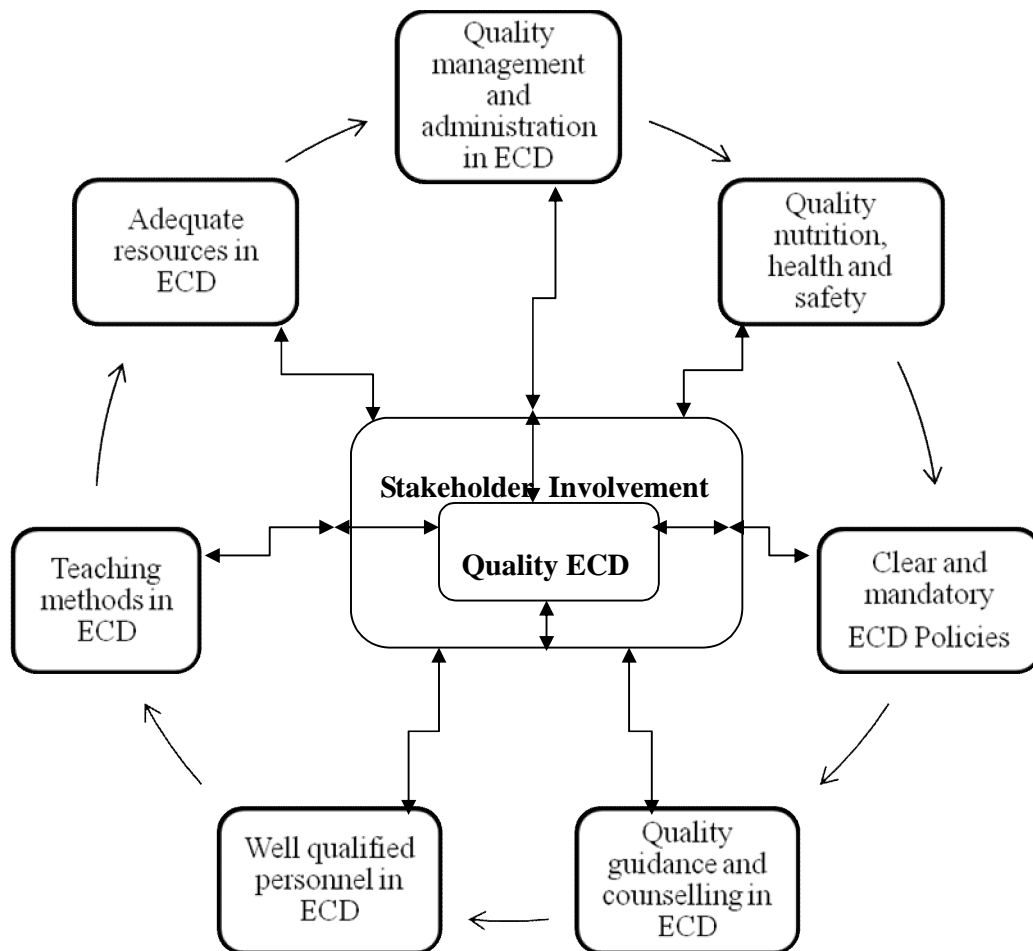
Activity 1: Quality management and administration of ECD programmes

Quality ECD programmes would be the result of programmes that were well managed and organised and had all the stakeholders' involvement. Good management involves furnishing, and arranging the play areas as well as cleaning the learning environment efficiently. The quality of ECD programmes would also be promoted by having ECD programmes managed by ECD specialists who are familiar with the ECD curriculum and offering intensive training for school heads, parents and other ministries on ECD curriculum management by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education.

Activity 2: ECD Policies

The quality of ECD programmes would be enhanced by having solid ECD policies that involve all stakeholders that would result in ownership and adherence to the policies. The policies need to be clear in providing practical guidelines for the running of ECD programmes. They should also specify key components of the ECD programmes and how they ought to be implemented by specific stakeholders. Policy makers would ensure that the ECD policy spells out guidance and counselling, nutrition, health and safety issues, management and organisation of ECD programmes, personnel qualifications, resource allocation, parental and stakeholder involvement, methodologies and guidelines.

Activity 3: Quality guidance and counselling in ECD

Availability of quality guidance and counselling services would result in quality ECD programmes. The quality of guidance and counselling services would be promoted by

a) prioritisation of the practical training of guidance and counselling for ECD trainee teachers, school heads and counsellors specifically for ECD children by policy makers;

b) training of practicing teachers, school heads and counsellors in practical guidance and counselling skills by policy implementers; and

c) production of well-trained and practically equipped teachers in guidance and counselling of ECD children by colleges and universities.

All stakeholders would be involved in the provision of guidance and counselling.

Activity 4: Quality nutrition, health and safety in ECD

There is need for quality nutrition, health and safety in ECD. This would materialise through

a) meeting ECD policy and regulation requirements in relation to the certificate of operation obtained from the City Council;

b) building and furnishing age appropriate facilities; and

c) training ECD teachers in first aid skills and placing a first aid kit in each ECD classroom for easy accessibility.

Quality ECD programmes would be fulfilled if all stakeholders would be involved in advocacy and provision of nutrition, health and safety in ECD.

Activity 5: Personnel qualification in ECD

The quality of ECD programmes depend on the qualifications of ECD teachers. All ECD teachers need to have relevant qualification(s). Having qualified, ECD personnel would be enhanced by having ECD policies with clear minimum ECD teacher qualifications and in training school heads and administrators in ECD curriculum issues. All stakeholder participation in calling for qualified ECD personnel would result in quality ECD programmes being offered.

Activity 6: Teaching methods in ECD

The teaching methods in ECD need to be improved. These would be improved by holding awareness campaigns for parents and school heads on the teaching methodology used in ECD and urging parents to support the play-way method as the best teaching and learning method in ECD. All stakeholder participation in advocating for play-way methods of teaching ECD children would result in quality ECD programmes being offered.

Activity 7: Resources adequacy in ECD

There is need for adequate resources in ECD. The availability of resources would be enhanced by

a) the Zimbabwean Government charging reasonable fees which would enable viability of the ECD programmes;

b) empowering the parents who are the main source of funding with money-making projects which would ensure that they pay their fees on time;

c) educating the school heads on the importance of having adequate human resources in ECD classrooms; and

d) educating all stakeholders on the importance of age-appropriate and adequate material resources.

All stakeholder participation in advocating for and allocating resources for ECD children would result in quality ECD programmes being offered.

The next section presents the recommendations for further study.

5.7 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Since this study focused on Harare urban primary schools, future research can investigate the quality of ECD programmes in peri-urban and rural schools and other regions of the country to test whether the issues established by this study are also applicable in those areas. Other researchers may also investigate the applicability of the quality ECD programmes model proposed in this study. The next section presents the final comments of the study.

5.8 FINAL COMMENTS

The study established the quality of ECD programmes in Harare primary schools in Zimbabwe. The views of school heads, ECD teachers and parents as well as the observations made gave valuable insight into the quality of ECD programmes in Harare primary schools.

The study found out that the management and organisation of ECD programmes had shortcomings which compromised the quality of the programmes. The study revealed that the school heads felt incompetent in the management of ECD programmes.

Another critical area of concern emerging from the study was the lack of quality nutrition, health and safety services in ECD programmes as well as the lack of guidance and counselling services for ECD children. The study also revealed that ECD policies lacked clarity and that parental and stakeholder involvement was

minimal. The school heads felt incompetent in the management of the ECD curriculum and the mentoring and assessment of newly deployed ECD teachers and student teachers due to a lack of specialisation. The study also highlighted that material, human and financial resources were inadequate.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: CHECKLISTS FOR THE ECD LEARNERS' LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Observation guide/checklist of the resources availability in ECD

Adequate Resources	Yes	No
Child-sized tables and chairs		
Child-sized toilets		
Child-sized basins		
Well-ventilated rooms		
Open play space		
8:1 ratio of toilets		
1:20 teacher to pupil ratio		
Child-sized play equipment (jungle gyms, see-saws, sandpit, tricycles, wheel barrows, merry-go-round, etc)		

Observation guide of the displays of play areas in ECD

Well displayed play area	Yes	No
Music and Movement area (rattles, drums, music books, triangles, tambourines, pianos and so on)		
Art area (non-toxic paints, paint brushes, crayons, papers, easels, scissors etc)		
Mathematics and science area (number lines, counters etc)		
Block area (big blocks, small blocks, lego etc)		
Dramatic area (kitchen utensils, household equipment, dolls, outdoor equipment etc)		
Fine motor area (puzzles, beads, shoes, threading activities		
Book corner		
Outdoor area (racing tyres, jungle gyms, wheel barrows, open space, merry-go-round, old cars, etc)		

Observation guide/checklist of teaching methods used in ECD

Teaching methods used	Yes	No
Drama or role play		
Songs and rhymes		
Project method		
Lecture method		

Observation guide/ checklist of activities offered to ECD children by the ECD teachers

Activities	Yes	No
Brief routine (toileting, breakfast, lunch, rest etc)		
Long free-play periods (indoors and outdoors)		
Short teacher-guided activities (counting, story time etc)		
Pupil selected activities (free play, free painting or drawing, etc)		

Observation guide/checklist for the nutrition, health and safety status in ECD

Description	Yes	No
A balanced diet being offered		
Well maintained play equipment		
Availability of water		
First aid kit		
Health record book		
Well cleaned rooms		
Well maintained playground		
Health checks		
Availability of disinfectants		
Certificate of health from the City Council		
Nutrition, health and safety discussions		

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR SCHOOL HEADS

PRIMARY SCHOOL INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR SCHOOL HEADS ON THE QUALITY OF ECD PROGRAMMES

THE ZIMBABWEAN PRIMARY SCHOOL INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR SCHOOL HEADS ON THE QUALITY OF ECD PROGRAMMES

Organisation and management of ECD programmes

1. How do you manage the ECD curriculum and personnel at your school?
2. To what extent do you feel competent in the education care of ECD children?

Components of the ECD programme

1. How do you ensure quality nutrition, health and safety in your ECD learning environment?
2. To what extent are parents involved in your ECD programme?
3. How can you improve the involvement of parents?
4. What aspects does the Government policy on ECD education and care address?
5. To what extent does the ECD policy address quality issues in ECD education and care?
6. What is the lead ministry that collaborate ECD programmes?
7. To what extent is the lead ministry helpful in the education of ECD children?
8. What other ministries are involved in the education and care of ECD children?
9. How are these other ministries involved in the education and care of ECD children?
10. To what extent does your school cater for ECD children who need guidance and counselling?
11. Who provides guidance and counselling in your school?
12. How do you ensure nutrition, health and safety in your ECD programmes?
13. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the local authority as partners in ECD programmes?
14. What other stakeholders partner with you in ECD education and care?

Personnel qualification in ECD

1. What are your ECD teachers' qualifications?

2. What influence does teacher qualification have on the quality of ECD programmes?

Teaching methods used in ECD

1. What teaching methods are used in the ECD classroom?

2. What kinds of activities are given to ECD children?

Availability of resources in ECD

1. What is the source of your financial resources?

2. To what extent are your ECD human resources adequate and reliable?

3. To what extent are your material resources adequate and age-appropriate?

4. What suggestions do you have on how ECD programmes can be improved in schools?

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR ECD TEACHERS

THE ZIMBABWEAN PRIMARY SCHOOL INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR ECD TEACHERS ON THE QUALITY OF ECD PROGRAMMES

Management and Organisation of ECD programmes

1. What is the teacher to pupil ratio in your class and how does it affect?
2. To what extent is your head/principal supportive of your ECD programme?
3. What motivations do you get from your school?
4. What is the impact of motivation or lack thereof on your service delivery?
5. What is your role in the ECD learning environment?

Components of an ECD programme

1. What Government policies on ECD education and care are available?
2. How clear are the ECD policies?
3. To what extent are the government policies that you follow when teaching ECD children helpful?
4. How often do you go for health check-ups?
5. To what extent do you offer guidance and counselling to your ECD children?
6. What do you offer in guidance and counselling?
7. To what extent do you involve parents in your ECD children's learning and play?
8. How do you ensure a safe environment for ECD children?
9. How do you deal with ECD children who get injured during play?
10. What suggestions can you give to help improve the quality of ECD programmes in your school and in the country?

Personnel qualification in ECD

1. What are your qualifications?
2. To what extent are you upgrading yourself professionally?
3. How does your qualification affect your service delivery?

Teaching Methods used in ECD

1. To what extent does your teaching and ECD learners' environment promote quality education and care?

2. What teaching methods do you use in your ECD classroom?

3. What kind of activities do you give to your ECD children?

Availability of resources in ECD

1. What is the source of your financial resources?

2. How adequate are the financial resources?

3. What is the impact of resource availability/unavailability on the quality of ECD programme?

4. To what extent are your material resources adequate and age appropriate?

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR ECD PARENTS

THE ZIMBABWEAN PRIMARY SCHOOL INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PARENTS OF ECD CHILDREN ON THE QUALITY OF ECD PROGRAMMES

Management and organisation of ECD programmes
1. What is your role in the school regarding ECD children?
2. To what extent does the school include you in decision making of ECD programmes?
3. How often does your school communicate with you about the progress and weaknesses of the child?
4. What is the effect of the school's communication with you on the ECD children's progress and learning environment needs?

Personnel qualification in ECD
1. How is your relationship like with the ECD teacher?
2. How does your relationship affect the quality of ECD programmes?
3. What is your ECD teacher's qualification?
4. What is the impact of that qualification to the teacher's service delivery?

Components of an ECD programme
1. How is the health, nutrition and safety of the ECD learning environment like?
2. To what extent is the ECD programme helpful to your ECD child and how?
3. What suggestions can you give on how the ECD teaching, learning and the learning environment can be improved?

Teaching methods in ECD programmes
1. To what extent are you involved in the teaching, learning and development of ECD children?
2. What teaching methods are used in the ECD classroom?
3. What kinds of activities are given to your ECD children?

Availability of resources in ECD

1. To what extent are the school's material resources adequate and age appropriate?

2. To what extent are the human resources adequate for your ECD children?

3. To what extent are the financial resources adequate?

APPENDIX E: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

UNISA | university of south africa

College of Education

P. O. Box 392

UNISA

003

Pretoria

14.12.12

The Ministry of Education, Sport, Arts and Culture

The Head Office

Harare

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN HARARE DISTRICT: T CHIKUTUMA.

I am undertaking a study on the quality of ECD programmes for a doctoral degree at the University of South Africa (UNISA). I am requesting permission to conduct research in Harare schools that have ECD programmes (4-5 year olds in the primary schools). The purpose of this academic study is to examine the quality of ECD education and care with the view to make recommendations for improvement of ECD programmes. The University Research Ethics requires written acceptance of this request from your office and your assistance on this issue will be highly appreciated.

Thanking you in anticipation.

Kind Regards

T. Chikutuma.

APPENDIX F: PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH

TENDAI CHIKUTUMA (S)

UNISA

....
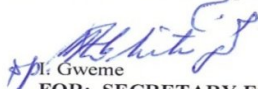
....

RE: PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH

Reference is made to your application to carry out research in the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture institutions on the title:

Quality of Early Childhood Development (ECD B)
Programmes in Harare Primary Schools
in Zimbabwe
....
....
....
....

Permission is hereby granted. However, you are required to approach the Provincial Education Director responsible for the schools you want to involve in your research for assistance and permission to enter schools.

You are also required to provide a copy of your final report to the Ministry since it is instrumental in the development of education in Zimbabwe.

I: Gweme
FOR: SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION, SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
SPORT AND CULTURE
POLICY PLANNING SECTION
10 DEC 2012
P.O. BOX 121, CAUSEWAY
ZIMBABWE

APPENDIX G: PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH

All communications should be
addressed to
 "*THE PROVINCIAL EDUCATION
DIRECTOR*"

ZIMBABWE

REF: G/42/1
Ministry of Education,
Sport and Culture
Harare Provincial Education Office
P. O. Box CY 1343
Causeway
Zimbabwe

Telephone   : 792671-9
Fax   : 796125/792548
E-mail   :
moeschre@yahoo.com

10 DECEMBER 2012

TENDAI CHIKUTUMA (SR)

UNISA

RE : PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH IN SOME SELECTED SCHOOLS

Quality of Early childhood Development (ECD B)
programmes in Harare Primary Schools in Zimbabwe.

Reference is made to your letter dated...... 10/12/12

Please be advised that the Provincial Education Director grants you authority to carry out your research on the above topic. You are required to supply Provincial Office with a copy of your research findings.

For Provincial Education Director
Harare Metropolitan Province

HARARE REGION
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION SPORT ARTS
1 0 DEC 2012
P.O. BOX CY 1343
CAUSEWAY HARARE

APPENDIX H: SCHOOL HEADS' LETTER REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

UNISA | university of south africa

College of Education
P. O. Box 392
UNISA
003Pretoria

02.02.2013

The School Head

Harare

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN YOUR SCHOOL: T CHIKUTUMA.

I am undertaking a study on the quality of ECD programmes for a doctoral degree at the University of South Africa (UNISA). I am requesting permission to conduct research in your school and the participants will include you as the administrator, an SDC representing the ECD parents and an ECD B teacher. The purpose of this academic study is to examine the quality of ECD education and care with the view to make recommendations for improvement of ECD programmes. The University of South Africa requires me to carry out this research and your assistance on this issue will be highly appreciated.

Thanking you in anticipation.

Kind Regards

T. Chikutuma.

APPENDIX I: INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM

Information Sheet and Consent Form for in-depth interviews on the quality of ECD programmes in Harare primary schools in Zimbabwe.

Dear Participant

My name is Tendai Chikutuma. I am a Doctoral student with UNISA. I am investigating the quality of Early Childhood Development programmes in Harare primary schools in Zimbabwe. I would like to find out whether your administration, teaching or involvement as a parent in the ECD programmes has an effect on the quality of ECD programmes.

Procedures

If you agree to participate, I will talk to you for about an hour and your conversation will be tape recorded. 29 other participants will also be interviewed and their responses and yours will be reported as findings. Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary (this means you and only you can choose whether you like to join the study). You may refuse to answer any question if you feel uncomfortable. You do not have to give me a reason for refusing to answer specific questions. You can decide to stop participating any time. If you decide you do not want to be part of this study, there will be no consequences for you. If at any time during the interview you decide you do not want to be part of the study you can do so by letting me know and it will be stopped. There is no wrong or right answer to any questions. I only want to know your opinions and ideas. The study does not anticipate any risks to you.

Privacy and confidentiality

I shall not record your name in this study. To help me remember what you say here I will record you on the audio tape and I will take notes as well. Your real name will not be recorded and you will choose the research name yourself. After translating your spoken conversation into written conversations the tapes will be destroyed. The only place your name will be recorded is on the information sheet and the informed consent form. These forms will only be in my possession and will never be used in any research output.

Benefits

There are no direct benefits from this study but your participation will help us find out how best the quality of ECD programmes can be improved to cater for children's holistic

development. With the information gained from the interviews we can try to make ECD programmes more meaningful.

If you have questions about the study you may ask now. If you do not have questions and agree to participate in this study, then we will go ahead and begin the interview. But first, I will ask you to sign this form stating that I, the interviewer have informed you of your rights and that you have agreed to participate in this interview. This is the only place your name will be entered. If you do not wish to sign your name you may simply mark with an "X".

Volunteer's Statement

The interview has been explained to me. I have been given a chance to ask questions I may have and I am content with the answers to all my questions. I also know that; my records will be kept private and confidential, I can choose not to be interviewed, not to answer certain questions or stop the interview at any time. I give consent that my interview can be tape recorded. I understand that 29 other volunteers' interviews will be analysed with mine and reported on as findings of the study.

Date...................................

Name of Volunteer...

Signature of Participant..

Interviewer's statement

I   Tendai Chikutuma,   the undersigned, have defined and explained to the volunteer in a language that s/he understands, the procedure to be followed and the risks and the benefits involved and the obligations of the interviewer.

Date..Name of Interviewer......................................

Signature...

UNISA | college of education

Research Ethics Clearance Certificate

This is to certify that the application for ethical clearance submitted by

T Chikutuma [33409145]

for a D Ed study entitled

Quality of Early Childhood Development programmes in Harare primary schools in Zimbabwe

has met the ethical requirements as specified by the University of South Africa College of Education Research Ethics Committee. This certificate is valid for two years from the date of issue.

Prof CS le Roux   18 April 2013
CEDU REC (Chairperson)
lrouxcs@unisa.ac.za
Reference number: 2013 APR/33409145/CSLR