

ABSTRACT

The central problem in this study was to establish the effects of teacher characteristics on classroom management (CM) in preschools in Nyandarua West district, Kenya. Research objectives and questions were formulated to guide the study. The key terms used in the study were defined. The review of the related literature outlined pupils' discipline, teacher characteristics and CM. The study also outlined teacher characteristics in relation to teacher preparation and CM and also on teacher characteristics in relation to seating arrangement and CM. The review of the related literature again focused on teacher characteristics in relation to organization of learning resources and CM and on teacher characteristics in relation to organization of classroom records and CM. Another focus was on teacher characteristics in relation to classroom time management. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design where qualitative data was collected and analyzed. Samples of 28 diploma 90 ordinary certificate and 18 untrained teachers were selected using simple random procedure. The researcher used teacher's questionnaire as the main data collection tool where the rate of return was 100%. He also observed the teachers managing classes using an observation schedule. The information in the observation schedule served the purpose of collaborating with the information recorded in the teachers questionnaire. All the data was gathered, summarized and analyzed by reading the information collected through the research instruments and then, pattern trends and relationships from the information gathered were established. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze qualitative data. Quantitative statistics were used to match the teacher characteristics numbers to CM skills. The researcher used frequency distribution tables to present the data. From the results obtained, the researcher wrote down the findings which guided him to draw conclusions and write down recommendations. The study findings revealed that teachers with longer teaching experience performed better in CM than the ones with shorter experience. The study also revealed that trained teachers are better in CM than untrained teachers and that the more professionally qualified teachers are better in CM than the less qualified teachers. The study further revealed that age has less effect on CM than the other teacher characteristics but the older teachers are a bit better than the younger ones. Based on the study findings it was recommended that preschool teachers should improve terms of employment to retain the teachers in the career in order to gain teaching experience. In addition it was recommended that the government should open up opportunities for preschool teachers to further professional training. Moreover it was recommended that the government should take over the responsibility of employing preschool teachers and provide them with retirement benefits to retain older teachers in the teaching profession. Other recommendations were that employers of preschool teacher should employ teachers with higher academic qualifications to be compared with the current teachers in CM. Furthermore it was recommended that male teachers should be employed to be compared with the females in CM. For further research it was suggested that a study be undertaken to establish factors affecting gender balance in the employment of preschool teachers. Another suggestion was that a study be undertaken to determine factors affecting employment of university degree holders as preschool teachers.