

Early Childhood Program for Pre-Primary Teachers of Karachi: Challenges and Opportunities

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ABSTRACT

Early years of childhood are a crucial period of life for their growth and development which laid the foundation for life time opportunities. Teachers play a fundamental role in the effective learning experiences of children. The objective of this study was to explore the current practice of Early childhood Teachers in the public schools of Karachi, their challenges and opportunities were also revealed through this study. The population of this study included the ECT (Early Childhood Teacher) in public school of Karachi, the sample size was 21 ECT which were selected through snowball sampling method due to unavailability of complete data of target population and closure of schools due to summer vacation. A questionnaire was developed which consisted of open ended and closed ended questions, using the mixed method approach i.e., sequential explanatory research design was followed, the finding revealed current practices of ECT in pre-primary schools of Karachi. It was found that majority teachers appointed as early Childhood Teachers in pre-primary schools of Karachi are trained and they are aware of the psychological needs of children, the biggest challenge which they are facing is lack of parental involvement which make their task more challenging. The findings from the open-ended questions explore more challenges of Early Childhood Teacher that are facing challenges of presenting, planning, creating a learning environment, establishing curriculum and dealing with the needs of toddlers. Equal distribution of resources, recruitment of more Early Childhood Teachers, awareness programs for parents, productive teachers training, effective mechanism for supervision from government was recommended for the improvement of Early childhood Education in Public schools.

Keywords: Early-Childhood, Pre-Primary Teachers, Challenges, Opportunities.

Introduction

Education is a continuous process from the birth of an individual till death. In these years, the most important period of life for cognitive growth and development is the early years of childhood. A number of studies explored that the early years of a child are a very sensitive period for their growth and development. It laid the foundation for life time opportunities which can be positive or negative depending on the experience of the child in early years, for this purpose the strong foundation for this critical period of life is essential. According to Zaidi et al (2018), the early years of a child not only provided the solid foundation

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for primary classes but also for the life ahead. Early Childhood Education fulfills the needs of children and nurtures them holistically.

There is a difference in opinion of subject expertise about the duration of early childhood education years, some are of the opinion that initial three years of childhood are important, some tell us that initial five years are important and majority of the studies agree that initial eight years are crucial periods of a person's life. National Association for the Education of NAEYC, 2014 stated that during the initial eight years of a child's life a child grows and develops rapidly, their brain also develops and grows faster than any other phase of their lives.

The importance of childhood education is emerging and its importance is ever increasing. It has given different names like Pre-school, Montessori, Early Education, Early Childhood Care and Education and Nursery. These programs are globally running in urban as well as rural areas of the country, these classes in public schools of Pakistan are known as *Katchi* classes, *Katchi* 'means not mature or not registered' these classes are for the beginners before entering into grade 1 (Khan et al, 2017).

Since 1947 the need of children education has been recognized, in the first education conference held in November 1947 but early childhood education classes were organized in 1970 by the name of *Katchi* classes this practice was discontinued in 1980 due to lack of interest of state, it was then recognized in 1992 officially in Education policy, it was not implemented due to lack resources and services. The present education policy recognized ECCE as an essential component of formal education. (Arshad Zamir,2018)

Pakistan has been facing a number of challenges and issues in the field of education since its creation and its outdated method of education which is more than 80 years old is not fulfilling the requirements of present need), he also stated that the public schools are the massive provider of free education in the state and the scope of Early childhood education is limited under these public institution, they are not stable and recognized. Vazir et al, (2009) indicates that in the public schools of Pakistan the quality of education is lacking due to low standard of teachers training, outdated textbooks, lack of basic needs, overloaded class room, corruption in recruitment, misapply of budget and low level of monitoring system.

There are no separate classrooms for these classes nor they have specific teachers for ECCE in public sector schools (Early Childhood Care & Education Standard 2018) they are merge with Primary classes in most of Public schools, according to latest study 2/3 public schools have no separate classrooms for *Katchi* classes, even this condition is more alarming in rural area where 70% of Primary schools are unable to provide basic facilities to teach in these classes (Nawaz et al,2021) states in a report that In addition to this the private sector contribution is declined by 4 % in 2021 which leads towards the issues of accommodation, basic facilities and train teachers (ASER,2021) the report also stated that Early Childhood Education was important but ignored part as it unable to contribute in the holistic development of child.

Though Early Childhood Education is not a novel concept in the education policy of Pakistan but due to lack of attention, it was not implemented properly. According to Ali et al, (2022) the quality of ECE is still an issue in Pakistan due lack of resources, standard teachers training and lack of awareness about the significance of ECE. To improve the early education and for effective learning experiences of children, it is necessary to train the teacher accordingly, the teacher must be aware of the psychological needs of children of early years. Early Childhood Education contains the activities which help to encourage holistic development of a child (Siddiqui et al, 2022).

In this regard the role of NGO's is significant in both public and private sector in rural and urban areas of Pakistan but they are limited and short scale programs which are unable to contribute to the large population of early years of children in Pakistan.

At Present, studies about the issues and challenges of Early Childhood education, lack of state interest and historical background of Early Childhood Education in Pakistan exist but limited research has been done on the current status of teachers in Pakistan participating at Early Childhood Education level in the public sector. This study will reveal the current status of ECT (Early Childhood Teacher) in public schools of

Karachi, their challenges and issues which they have been facing during teaching and learning process and also give suggestions to improve the quality of teachers which will ultimately increase the effective learning experience of students.

Research Objectives

In the proposed study, the researcher investigates the current status of teachers at primary level in public schools of Karachi. Specifically, this study aims to:

1. Find whether teachers are aware about the psychological needs of students;
2. Explore the current practices of teachers at pre-primary level;
3. Identify the challenges and opportunities of Early Childhood Teachers through their perspective.

Research Questions

RQ 1: What is the current knowledge level of teachers about various concepts of early childhood education?

RQ 2: What are the current practices of ECT (Early Childhood Teacher) at pre-primary level?

RQ 3: What are the challenges faced and opportunities avail by the Early childhood Teachers?

Scope of the Study

The study's scope is limited to the Early Childhood Teacher (ECT) teaching at pre-primary level at public schools of Karachi.

Definition of the Key Terms

Early Childhood Education (ECE): It is the educational theory which deals with the teaching of children formally up to eight years. It is also known as Nursery classes.

Early Childhood Education Program: A head Start program, a state licensed or regulated child care program, or a program that serves children from birth through age six that addresses the children's cognitive, social, emotional and physical development (Ghuman *et al.*, 2015).

Pre-primary: The learning space offered to the students before entering primary school. It is also known as Nursery school or play school; it can be privately or publicly operated or may be subsidized from public funds.

Literature Review

Pre-Primary Level

The zero level is specially designed for the social, emotional and physical development of the child. It also prepares a child for entering into Primary level. The safe environment is provided for the learning to interact socially with each other under the supervision and guidance of the teacher level 0 is further divided into two groups from 0 to two years of age and 3 to the beginning of the Primary level.

It has given various names like Pre-school, Pre-primary, Early Childhood Education, Nursery kindergarten etc. This level is school based or it is given in proper institutions which may be community-based, home based or center- based. The informal education of children is not part of it.

According to International Bureau of Education, Pre -Primary Education is specially planned for 3 years to the beginning of primary level, the main characteristic of this level is to interlink children with peers and teachers which help them to improve their linguistic and skills require to move socially, children also learn the basic concepts of mathematics and alphabets. Children are also encouraged to take part in play so they can interact with each other which is necessary for the development of social skills, they are also motivated to analyze their environment around them to explore the world (Ibrahim et al, 2022).

Early Childhood Education

Early childhood Education theory deals with the teaching of children from their birth to eight years. In this teaching period all the formal and informal activities are involved which is experienced by the children. It is proved from many researches that this time period is very critical in the life of any individual.

The first five years are like the building blocks of child 's life; According to Shakeel et al, (2011) the first five years of child are important than the rest of the life and to get success, maximum learning support and opportunities are needed, in these years 85% of Brain developed and working in these years.

As maintained by Lakhani (2021) this time period is mostly considered the valuable and important phase of any person's life. Further he admits that Early childhood education believes in learning through play. This theory was given by Jean Piaget.

Early years activities must be very important for their future growth and development. The teachers and parents play a vital role in providing a positive and fruitful environment to make their rest of life socially and emotionally stable. So, it's necessary to give quality care especially to the infant/toddler. In this regard the role of teacher is very challenging; the main challenge is to make a strong relationship with each other with love and care.

On the authority of Raheem et al, (2020) meeting the physical and emotional needs of the child with love and care is a very important and challenging responsibility for early Childhood teachers. To face these challenges and to give a proper environment according to the need and requirement of different stages of Early years of child education the number of programmers are running throughout the world. Program for infant /toddlers from age 0 to 2 years are conducted then Preschool programs were also designed for children aged 3 to 5 years to develop them socially and emotionally. Another program for full day care is a child-care program. It is actually for those parents who are working and doing jobs.

The success of an individual lies in the establishment of their early years. During this time period the human brain is rapidly changing; It is a period when child cognitive skills can build- the base of reading, Math's, science, even social and emotional growth; gross motor skills are also developed. The investment in early education especially among disadvantaged children improves not only cognitive skills but also behavior skills like their motivation, self-esteem and sociability (Dahlberg et al, 2013).

Number of studies Arshad et al, (2018) that tell us about the advantage of early childhood education and its impact on social and emotional and cognitive development of a child. The quality of early childhood Education is also important for the holistic development of a child. Child learns through their day to day experience, their interaction with teachers, peers and material during activities are seen as the proximal determinants of child development.

For effective learning process in early years of child education it is necessary to consider, the structure of early childhood Education i.e. Teacher child ratio, size of the group and teachers' qualification also affects the learning of children (Franchett et al, 2019). It means early childhood Education consists of a small child-teacher ratio and higher education of teachers to maintain the quality of education in the early years.

Early childhood education theory emerges day by day specially in the developing countries. According to Mehmud, 2014 there is very much evidence that early childhood education can reduce poverty, improve social mobility from one generation to another and lay the foundation of learning for the whole life.

According to Tahira et al, (2021) early childhood education is the deep concept of a vast scope; it not only leads to the foundation of a child's life but also makes him or her a useful citizen which will be beneficial for the society as well as for the country. So, it is very important for developing and underdeveloped countries to pay attention towards their nation's early education to improve their lives and remove poverty from the state.

The other benefit of early Childhood Education is of course the high academic achievement, many researches have shown that the children who start learning in their early age achieve higher grades seek higher education than the student who had not received any formal education in their early years.

Philosophies of Early Childhood Program

Montessori: It is the method of education which was given by Dr. Maria Montessori, she was one who first acquired the Doctor of Medicine Degree in Italy. She has designed materials and different techniques which enable children to learn naturally. The children by following these techniques and using materials make a pattern which follows through Reading, Writing and Mathematics skills naturally. This philosophy of learning believes that children have a natural desire to learn, they can learn easily when they have been provided with enhanced surroundings with specially designed materials and highly qualified and trained teachers they can learn naturally through hands-on activities (Shakeel, N,2020).

Rudolf: This education philosophy believes in child- centered education, the founder of this system was Rudolf Steiner, he founded first school in Germany in the year 1919. According to him each and every child is an individual and need attention, he said that life is a whole unit and one should not only consider child but its whole life, Steiner philosophy summarized the child- center approach of progressive which leads towards the development of child physically, socially and intellectually. This philosophy also emphasizes love of art and nature and its inborn relation to humanity. The aim of including art and nature in education leads towards happiness in life and living, potential for doing work (Cuartas, 2020).

Play is an important component of Waldorf early learning program, through play children can develop their creative thinking, social skills and problem-solving skills through free play with natural material of wood, sea shells and handmade toys through which the child can imagine its own stories and games.

Reggio Emilia Approach: This is a child centered philosophical approach to educate children specially for preprimary and primary education. This approach emerged after World War II and the founder of this approach was a teacher named Loris Malaguzzi with the support of local people and parents, specifically women, who lived in nearby villages and towns in Italy. He opened the first Reggio Emilia school in 1963, he believed that child can express themselves by 100 languages and they show their understanding by expressing their learning not only in the form of words or writing but different nonverbal languages like glances, gestures and emotions, this approach also encourage children to express their knowledge by different performing art like drama play, dance, writing, painting, sculpting, constructing and other activities. There is no fixed curriculum or settings for each nursery. Curriculum is set according to the interest of children, parents and communities are also involved in curriculum planning and strategies (Kazi et al, 2018).

Teachers' Role in Early Childhood Education

Early childhood teachers play a very vital role in the learning and development of the child. The child achieves a higher level of intellect with the help of a teacher than he achieves by himself (Ponum *et al*, 2020).

The play at early years has a significant role in early childhood development. Teachers organized these play experiences to develop children mentally and physically. The children get more benefits from play when the teacher supports the play activities and helps the students who have difficulties in them. The planning of activities is also the job of a teacher. The teacher plans the curriculum according to the pre-knowledge, age growth and developmental stage of the children (Noh *et al*, 2018).

Besides learning drawing, painting, writing and reading skills, oratory work, basic mathematics skills, language skills like reading and writing skills are not effectively taught and learned if the teacher role is passive. The teacher is a person who knows and enhances the activities which are planned for a child to develop their personality (Devlieghere *et al*, 2020).

Quality teachers and trained teachers are asserts of the Early Childhood Education program. They are not only fruitful for availing education but also being a change in educational reforms.

The child can get education not only from school but also from family, society and community whereas in school a child gets education in a systematic way by teaching process and to do teaching effectively one should have knowledge about human development. It is the teacher's responsibility to select the activities or material which is appropriate for the different stages in early years (Fleer et al, 2018).

Challenges and Opportunities of Teachers

The research conducted by Academy of Educational Planning & Management Ministry Of Federal Education and Professional training, 2017 in the comparison of the National Education Policy 2009 provision with the current status of ECCE reveals that ECCE teachers has given limited training of one or two weeks which was given to the teachers which are already teaching in primary classes in public schools, there is no specific trained teachers for this purpose. According to Early Childhood Care and Education Policy Sindh 2015, there are no standard and cost -effective accredited ECCE teacher's education, training and development institutes, programs, policies and mechanisms to fulfill the need of pre- primary population (Lucas *et al*, 2018).

To achieve the goals of access and quality it is essential to improve the quality of teacher's competency, adequacy and presence. The quality of teachers improves only by educating teachers by giving training to them.

Early years of primary education requires highly qualified, trained and responsive teachers but unfortunately the primary teachers required low level of education and training. In Pakistan, the quality of their teacher's certification programs is also not up to the mark. Teachers teaches in traditional method of rote-learning and they are focusing on memorization of content present in the textbook, the students are assess by summative method, they are given grades and numbers on their performance, their learning is measured by skills of reading, writing and speaking fluency, they emphasize on memorization of work rather than conceptual learning which is the essence of Early development (Nicholson *et al*, 2020).

Mehmood (2014) states that Teachers training in Pakistan usually fails to generate interest for learning and also not able to raise the best condition for Early Childhood learning.

Research Methodology

Research Strategy

In this research, the researchers used a mixed method approach i.e., quantitative as well as qualitative approach. The purpose of using this method is to enhance the finding of quantitative data or to validate it. The significant findings used for further qualitative explanation, the collection and analysis of findings from both qualitative and quantitative phases combined together to give a complete picture of the research problem.

Population

The population of this research study was the teachers teaching at Pre-primary level in Karachi, appointed as ECT (Early Childhood Teacher) by Government of Sindh School Education & Literacy Department.

The following numbers of ECT have been taken from the following towns of Karachi.

Table 1: *Selected Sample*

Name of Town	Number of teachers appointed as ECT
Jamshed Town	19
Gulshan -e- Iqbal Town	06
Malir Town	12
Saddar Town	01
Total	38

Sampling Procedure

The snowball sampling method was used to collect data which is non probable method, this method of sampling was used due to unavailability of number of target population and closure of schools in Karachi due to summer vacations therefore chain-referral method was used to collect data

Sample Size

The subject of this study were teachers appointed as Early Childhood Teachers in public schools of Karachi, the total number of populations were 38 in district East of Karachi and Malir district the complete data is unavailable, according to the record of Sindh Education and literacy Department. This study took 21 ECT teachers from public schools of Karachi.

Research Instrument

The researcher was developed a questionnaire for the teachers to find the current knowledge level of teachers about the various concepts of early childhood Education, to explore their current practices and identify their challenges and opportunities, the questionnaire comprises of section A ,for the demographic information of participants, the section B contained 30 statements, out of which 17 statements related to the current practice of ECT teachers and 13 related to the challenges and opportunities of Early Childhood, the data gathering instrument structured in Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 options 1is for strongly disagree, 2 for disagree, 3 for neural ,4 for agree and 5 for strongly agree. For in depth study the researcher added 2 open ended questions in the questionnaire.

Procedure

Before collecting the data from the respondents, the researcher took consent from them as an ethical consideration of research. The researcher kept the collected data, their corresponding reply with the agreement between respondent and researcher, the collected data was organized, statically calculations were done to analyze data.

Plan of Data Analysis

To analyze the quantitative data the descriptive statistical method using SPSS for responses was used, to analyze the qualitative data thematic analysis form was used, the collected data was quantified and presented in percentage form.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Phase One: *Quantitative Interpretation of Result (Analysis of questionnaire)*

Table 1: *Demographic Characteristics of the Participants*

Sample characteristics	F	%
Gender		
Male	0	0
Female	21	100
Age		
Below 30 years	2	9.5
30-39 years	12	57.1
40-49 years	5	23.8
50 above	2	9.5
Marital status		
Single	3	14.3
Married	18	85.7
Years of Experience		
Less than 3 years	5	23.8
3-6 years	5	23.8
7-10 years	5	23.8
11 and above	6	28.6
Academic Qualification		
B. A/B. Com/BSc	9	42.9
M.A/M. Com/MSc	11	52.4
missing	1	4.8
Professional qualification		
B.Ed.	9	42.9
M.Ed.	4	19
Others	6	28.6
Attended ECE Training		
Yes	16	76.2
No	5	23.8

N=21

The total number of participants of this study are 21 and according to table1, all the participants are female (100%), This table shows the age range of the respondents. Majority (57.1%) lie in the range of 30-39 years. The academic qualification of majority of the participants is Master i.e. 52.2% .The professional qualification of respondents, majority of them are B.Ed. (42.9%), 4 are M.Ed. (19%) and 6 have other professional qualification, 1 response is missing in the table, majority of the respondents have attended early Childhood Education Training (76%) and they have experienced of more than 11 years of teaching (28.6 %), out of 21 participants 5 have not attended any training related to Early Childhood Education.

Current Practices of Early Childhood Education Teachers

This section of questionnaire was aimed to explore the current practice of ECT teachers in Public schools of Karachi, it comprises 17 statements and 21 participants responding to these statements. Table 2 showed the information collected by the researcher and analyzed them on the basis of Early Childhood Teachers' views on their current practices in their school, this section was constructed on 5 point Likert Scale, (1= strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=undecided, 4= agree, 5= strongly agree).

Table 2: *Finding related to the statements about the Current practice of ECE teacher*

Items	Statement	SA (%)	A (%)	UND (%)	DA (%)	SDA (%)
1	I pre plan activities before going to the class	61.9	33.3	4.8	0	0
2	I plan outdoor activities on daily basis	4.8	28.6	42.9	4.8	0
3	Children are given opportunity to go for outdoor games in my school	14.3	42.9	4.8	28.6	9.5
4	There is an enough secure space to play outdoor games in my school	19	52.4	9.5	14.3	4.8
5	I have enough instructional space to move in the classroom	14.3	71.4	4.8	9.5	0
6	A separate set up of ECE classroom is done in my school	14.3	38.1	28.6	4.8	14.3
7	There is a reading corner in my classroom where different stories books are kept	19	47.6	19	4.8	9.5
8	I use to tell stories for their better understanding	57.1	42.9	0	0	0
9	Children get plenty of opportunity to trace, draw and color pictures prepared for them	19	57.1	19	0	4.8
10	I use flash cards to make them familiar with different pictures and words	33.3	33.3	19	4.8	9.5
11	Children are provided with material like beads, block and buttons for sequencing and sorting activities	19	42.9	19	14.3	4.8
12	I keep record of children height and weight on monthly basis	9.5	28.6	23.8	28.6	9.5
13	Children get opportunity to walk, run and climb every day	9.5	81	4.8	0	4.8
14	Material like clay and dough is provided to the students	14.3	52.4	9.5	19	4.8
15	I prefer multilingual approach to instruct children	9.5	81	4.8	0	4.8
16	Children are given opportunities to participate in art, music and drama	23.8	47.6	14.3	4.8	4.8
17	Students have facilities of audio-visual aid for teaching and learning purpose	9.5	66.7	4.8	9.5	4.8

The following facts were revealed from analyzing the data, the majority of the teachers believe that they are pre-plan before going to the to their classes (i.e. 33.3% agree and 61.8 %strongly agree) about planning outdoor activities on the daily basis 28% respondent are agreed and 23% are strongly agreed that they plan outdoor activities for children and about giving opportunities to the students for outdoor activities regularly i.e. 42.9% agreed with it and 14.3% are strongly agreed. The majority (i.e., 52.4% agreed and 19% strongly agreed) that their school provided secure space to play outdoor games to children.

Out of 21 participants, around half were of the perception that they have a separate setup for the ECE classroom in their school,14.3% strongly disagreed,4.8% disagreed and 28.6% were undecided on this point. The majority (i.e. 71.4% agreed and 14.3% strongly agreed)) that they have enough instructional

space to move. A number of ECT teachers (i.e. 47.6 % agreed and 19% strongly agreed that their classroom contains a separate reading corner where different story books are kept and majority agreed that they use it to tell stories for better understanding (57.9% agreed and 42.1 % disagreed).

Challenges and opportunities of ECE teacher of Early childhood Teacher

This part of questionnaire identifies the Challenges and opportunities of early Childhood teacher, this part contains 13 statements, as mentioned previously that 21 ECT teachers were participated in this study, this section analyses the challenges and opportunities of Preprimary teachers at public schools of Karachi working as ECT (Early Childhood Teacher).

Table 3 indicates the frequencies and percentage of respondents who strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree with each statement.

Table 3: *Finding related to the statement that indicates the challenges and opportunities of ECT teachers*

Statements	SA (%)	A (%)	NEU (%)	DA (%)	SDA (%)
My class room size is appropriate to provide every child with adequate space	9.5	61.9	14.3	9.5	4.8
The teacher student ratio is appropriate in ECE classes	14.3	42.9	14.3	14.3	14.3
Enough material and equipment is provided me for teaching and learning process	14.3	57.1	4.8	14.3	9.5
There is a separate space/store room provided to me to keep the material	19	42.9	4.8	23.8	9.5
Computer facility is provided me in the school	19	42.9	14.3	19	4.8
Existing teachers. Training support me in teaching and learning process	23.8	61.9	4.8	4.8	0
I get opportunities for in service training	4.8	71.4	0	19	4.8
I get opportunities to attend workshop, seminars or training related to ECE	14.3	57.1	9.5	9.5	9.5
I am satisfied with the salary package given to me	14.3	38.1	28.6	9.5	9.5
I feel pressure of workload in pre primary classes due to lack of facilities	19	52.4	4.8	4.8	19
I get enough time to carefully supervise all children	9.5	76.2	4.8	4.8	4.8
Lack of parental involvement make my work more challenging	33.3	47.6	4.8	9.5	4.8

In general, the participants believe that their classroom size is appropriate i.e., 61% agreed and 9.5% strongly agreed and the teacher-student ratio is appropriate in ECE classes (42.9 % agreed and 14.3 % strongly disagree).

Most of them also agreed that they are provided with enough material and equipment for teaching and learning process i.e., 14.3 % were strongly in agreement ,57.1% were in agreement. Majority of the teachers agreed that a separate room and space is provided to them to keep their material (19% strongly agreed and 61.9% agreed). A number of teachers also believe that the present teachers' training of ECE is helpful in teaching process i.e. 61.9% agreed and 23.8% strongly agreed, they are of the opinion that they get opportunities for in service training(71.4% agreed and 4.8 % strongly agreed)where as 19.8% disagreed and 4.8 % strongly disagreed) majority of the respondent (57.1 % agreed and 14.3 % strongly agreed on the statement that they get opportunities to attend seminars ,workshops or training related to early childhood Education. Out of 21 participants half of them believe that they are satisfied with their salary package given

to them (8 are agreed and 3 strongly agreed) while 6 are undecided and the rest of 4 are not satisfied with their salary package.

About the challenges of work load, the majority agreed that due to lack of facilities they feel pressure (52.4% agreed and 19% strongly agreed). The fact that lack of parental involvement makes the teachers' work more challenging is revealed 47.6% agreed and 33.3% strongly agreed that parent's involvement is lack in pre-primary classes in public schools of Karachi. Generally, the teachers agreed on the statement that they get enough time to carefully supervise all the children.

Phase Two: Qualitative interpretation of Responses

Analysis of Open-Ended Questions

In addition to quantitative data and to fill the gaps in numeric values, the support of qualitative data has been taken. This technique reveals in-depth information. This part of research was conducted by asking open -ended questions in the last section of the questionnaire. The collected data was quantified and presented in descriptive form. Two open-ended questions were asked to the ECT (Early Childhood Teachers), 21 respondents were participating in this qualitative phase. In the first question teachers were comment on the greatest challenge they have faced as an ECE teacher, out of 21 participant majority i.e., 5 (23.8%) were indicated that their greatest challenge is lack of parental involvement in the learning of their child, they are facing absence of cooperation, attention and communication issues. It is important to arrange awareness programs and workshops to overcome this challenge. Another challenge highlighted by the teachers as about their teaching practice in the ECE classes 5 of 21 participants (i.e., 23.8 %) were facing challenges of presenting, planning, create learning environment, establishing curriculum, dealing with needs of toddlers, effective in-service training of ECE (early Childhood Education) can help to cope up with these challenges. Out of 21 participants 4 of them (19%) are of the opinion that they are facing a challenge of lack of facilities and support which leads towards the issues of work load, lack of equipment and facilities also make their task more challenging, for this purpose equipment and facilities should be provided to them. Challenges of the large strength of ECE classes were indicated by 2 respondents out of 21 i.e., 9.5%, communication gap was faced by 2 respondents (9.5%). The language issue was faced by 2 participants (9.5%), by using a bilingual approach of teaching, teachers can overcome this challenge. From 21 participants 2 of them (9.5%) pointed out the challenge of motivation of children, this challenge can be overcome through including play activities, storytelling method and make the learning process interesting for the children, one of the participants (4.7 %) is facing no challenge as an Early Childhood Teacher.

In another open -ended question they were asked to give suggestions to improve the teaching and learning process of ECE classes, the 20 participants were replying to this question, one didn't comment on it. The participants' suggestions were divided into two sub categories: the first one was improvement steps should be taken by the government and second was improvement steps taken by the teachers to improve their teaching and learning process. Majority of the participants (55%) suggested that government should take steps of effective supervision of ECE classes in public schools, involve communities, create activity based and easy syllabus, provide equipment and recruit more ECT trained teachers, provide facilities of technology and arrange big and separate ECE classes in their schools, they suggested that the strength of classroom should be less, the effective supervision method of these classes and allocation of more funds by government can help to cope up with these challenges and issues. Out of 20 participants 9 (45%) were suggested that teachers should also take the steps for improving the ECE classes performance. They suggested that the attributes of creating friendly environment, reducing strictness toward children, good behavior of teacher, sincere and loyal to their profession, support child in the development of all domain, focus on child safety, health and happiness and by using assessment and observations to check their progress can leads towards the improvements of teaching and learning process.

Conclusion

Based on research findings it is concluded that majority of Early childhood Teachers are trained and they have knowledge about the various concepts of ECE classes, a number of teachers facilitates students by telling stories, give opportunity to play outdoor games, participation in art, music and drama ,use flash cards, provide material like clay, dough, beads, blocks which indicates that teachers are aware of the psychological needs of the children, in addition to this the ECT teachers are facing challenges of lack of parental involvement which make their task more challenging, they also feel pressure of workload due to lack of facilities. The findings from the open-ended questions explore more challenges of Early Childhood Teacher that are facing challenges of presenting, planning, creating a learning environment, establishing curriculum and dealing with the needs of toddlers.

Recommendations

- On the basis of above conclusion, the researcher makes the following recommendations;
- Equal distribution of resources should be made in all the pre-primary schools of Karachi of public sector
- More ECT teachers should be recruit to overcome the burden of existing teachers
- To increase parental involvement, an effective parents ‘awareness program should be designed which includes workshops related to the ECE program should be conducted to motivate parents.
- Government should ensure effective supervision in pre-primary schools of Karachi in public sector
- Productive teachers training and refreshers courses, workshops and seminars should be conducted by the government.
- The attributes of sincerity and loyalty towards their profession also leads towards the success of ECE classes.

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Conflict of Interest


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