THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL STUDIES

Extent the Domains of Learning (Cognitive, Affective and Psychomotor) Are Used in Assessing Children in Public Early Childhood Education Centers in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya

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Abstract:
The purpose of the study was to establish the extent the three domains of learning (cognitive, affective and psychomotor) considered in assessing children in public early childhood education centres in Kenya. The study was underpinned by Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory (SLT). The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The study targeted 2330 ECDE teacher in the 775 public ECDE centers in Uasin Gishu County. To sample size was 341ECDE teachers selected 120 ECDE centers. This study adopted a stratified and simple random sampling technique to select respondents. Participants were interviewed and provided with structured questionnaires. Results were analysed using descriptive statistics and presented using tables and charts. Preschool teachers were aware of the three domains of learning, majority of them were unable to state a specific learning domain, suggesting that preschool teachers in Uasin Gishu County may not be fully familiar with learning domains. The teachers reported that they assess students on both daily and weekly basis, although few of them conducted assessment on a monthly or annual basis. Continuous training and constant evaluation of ECDE teachers in Uasin Gishu County with a special focus on instructional strategies and encapsulation of the three domains of learning in all the ECDE centres. It is important for teachers to understand that assessment of learning should be used primarily for assessing what the learner has learned and must be conducted as frequent as possible.

Keywords: *Domains, Learning, Cognitive, Affective, Psychomotor, Early Childhood Education Centers*

1. Introduction

Education begins from the moment a child is born and continues for the rest of his life. The learning capabilities of children continue for the rest of their lives but not at the intensity that is demonstrated in the preschool years. Early childhood development education (ECDE) refers to a comprehensive approach to policies and programmes for children from birth to eight years of age with the active participation of their parents and caregivers (Smith, 2000). Its purpose is to protect the child's rights to develop his or her full cognitive, emotional, social and physical potential. Early Childhood serves the critical role of preparing young children for subsequent levels of Education. The need for a holistic development of children is appreciated all over the world. Consistently, United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child, African Charter on Rights and Welfare of the Child (Organisation of African Union, 1990) and the Government of Kenya (Republic of Kenya, 1998) recognize the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for its physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development.

A child is endowed with some powers that enable him to construct and develop his personality. Bruce (2012) defines Early Childhood Education (ECE) as a domain of education theory which relates to the teaching of young children (formally and informally) up until the age of about eight. This age bracket presents crucial opportunities for the development of a child's academic, behavioral, and social competencies (Roopnarine and Johnson, 2013). These skills have been shown to be essential for later school success thus highlighting the importance of ECE in stimulating child development and improved chances of doing well in later schooling and in the labour market (Wortham and Hardin, 2015). Early childhood is referred usually to the age of normal schooling years in most nations. Babies and toddlers need positive early learning experiences to help their intellectual, social and emotional development and this lays the foundation for later school successes.

Globally, education is a fundamental human right (United Nations Convention for Rights of Children (UNCRC, 2000). Unprecedented attention has been focused on literacy among children (Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center, 2012). Jomtien World Conference on Education for all (EFA) of 1990 and Dakar Conferences (2000) under scored the importance of instructional resources in ECE for the purposes of improving children's learning. In the second half of the twentieth century,

the early education system in the United States grew substantially. This trend allowed the majority of American children to have access to some form of early childhood education (Roopnarine and Johnson, 2013).

One of the first early childhood education initiatives in the United States was the Head Start program, started in 1965 (O'Sullivan, 2013). Head Start is a federal government education initiative that has provided children from low-income family's free access to early education. It targets children of low socioeconomic status or those who qualify in some at-risk category. Head Start programs are funded by the federal Department of Health and Human Services (Roopnarine and Johnson, 2013). Teaching is acknowledged as a "complex activity that requires a myriad of knowledge, skills and capabilities" (Loughran, 2013). In Europe, pre-schools were created to provide humanitarian services related to health and welfare to children from poor families and those affected by war and slum conditions (Jay, 2012). However, though created for the poor, the middle class hijacked pre-school education by taking their children to these pre-schools in most countries except in France and Belgium. As a result the provision to the poor diminished, thus affecting access to ECE negatively. This change of focus also affected the curriculum with a shift from concern for welfare to that of health, education and creative expression based on the Frobel an idea of play (Austin, 2010).

According to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), "Development in one domain influences and is influenced by development in other domains" (NICHD, 2001). The early childhood years are an opportune time to develop various fundamental movements, cognitive functions, and affective development (Austin, 2013). Movement-based experiences are valuable for development in all domains. The movement-based activities usually revolve around play activities. Early childhood education thus should focus on children's learning through play, based on the research and philosophy of Jean Piaget (Piaget, 1973). The Piaget's stage theory explains that the changes in play through each stage parallel each stage of cognitive, psychomotor and emotional development.

Play activities have been attested to involve children's total self, encapsulating their mental, physical, social and emotional status (Samuelsson and Carlsson, 2008). Play has also been shown to instigate social, cognitive, psychomotor and emotional development in any child (Hughes, 2009, Vygotsky, 2004). Additionally, researchers have found a strong link between play and learning for young children, especially in the areas of problem solving, language acquisition, literacy, numeracy and social, physical, and emotional skills (Hirsh-Pasek and Golinkoff, 2003, Welsh, Nix *et al.,* 2010). The challenge thus lies in the integration of the various play activities and play resources to achieve a holistic development of the children encompassing all three learning domain; cognitive, affective and psychomotor.

Early Childhood Development programmes in Kenya were launched in 1980 but at the time the study was conducted it was not yet a policy that pupils who enrolled for grade one should have attended ECD programmes. It was also not yet mandatory for parents to enroll their children in ECD programmes (Sarah, 2013). The Government of Kenya recognizes that early childhood development and education interventions are significant to the social and economic development of the country as they provide children with a fairer and better start in life. The Kenya government has come up with the Session Paper No. 1 of the Ministry of Education (2005) which acknowledges the attainment of EFA by 2015 as a major goal commitment of the National Following promulgation of the constitution in 2010, ECDE in Kenya was devolved to the County level where service delivery is managed and funded in particular in ECD and TVET (Cheserek and Mugalavai, 2012).

The management of ECD in the county level is not currently well-spelt out. Much still needs to be done to further improve quality in service delivery and the rapid scaling-up of Kenya's ECD programme especially in the current devolved system. The Kenyan government in an endeavor to embrace the NAEYC and NAECS guidelines formulated an assessment tool called Kenya School Readiness Assessment Tool (KSRAT) (Mochama, 2015). Through the newly established tool, ECDE children would be gauged using their chronological age and development. Assessment for learning is successful when it is embedded in teaching and learning. Regrettably, many ECDE centers in Kenya are still focused on assessment of learning summative rather than assessment for learning. It is on the basis of the prevailing circumstances that the study endeavors to investigate the instructional and assessment strategies used in early childhood and education centers in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya.

2. Literature review

There are three main domains of learning and all teachers should know about them and use them to construct lessons. These domains are cognitive (thinking), affective (emotion/feeling), and psychomotor (physical/kinesthetic). Each domain has a taxonomy associated with it. One way of considering knowledge in school curricula is to identify the learning domains represented as cognitive, affective, and psychomotor (Sowell, 1996). Domains are areas of learning that share a common characteristic in shaping a learner becoming more useful in the society. The cognitive domain is associated with intellectual functions; the affective domain with emotions, attitudes, and values; and the psychomotor domain with physical activities (Bloom, 1956). Domains and taxonomies of learning, known for half a century to the education community, continue as major ways of classifying learning outcomes.

Unfortunately, the case has been contrary to reality as Prince (1998) observes that curriculum workers have shifted their thinking about affective learning and have given it less priority it deserves to help achieve cognitive skills. He continues observing that though affective and psychomotor taxonomies are used less frequently they continue to provide valuable information about attitudes and motor skills as learning outcome. Lickona (1993), a developmental psychologist suggested

that the crisis in the nation's youth culture was due to factors such as a decline of family and disturbing trends in a mass media programs.

Assessment is not limited to what people know and can do; it also includes how they learn, how they feel about themselves, how motivated they are, and what they like and don't like (O'Donnell, Reeve, & Smith, 2009). "Issues related to an individual's attitudes, opinions, dispositions and feelings are usually labeled affective learning" (p. 485). A further comment is observed by Hammer (1991) that students belief and attitudes about the subject matter affect their orientation to learning. When students co-construct knowledge while sharing on a task, cognitive process interacts with motivation and emotional processes at both the individual and the group level.

Important influences between motivation and cognition can be observed in both directions: students' individual motivation influences how deeply they are willing to engage in the joint task. Individual task commitment is also affected by volitional regulation at the group level. Despite these important interactions, studies of collaborative learning often focus on either cognitive or emotional-affective aspects. Baher, Andriessen, and Jarvela (2013) observe that, "even worse, the role of motivation and emotion in knowledge co-construction has often been neglected in favor of cognitive aspect" (p. 139).

2.1. Cognitive Domain

"The last two decades of infancy research have seen dramatic changes in the way developmental psychologists characterize the earliest stages of cognitive development. The infant, once regarded as an organism driven mainly by simple sensorimotor schemes, is now seen as possessing sophisticated cognitive skills and even sophisticated concepts that guide knowledge acquisition" (Madole and Oakes 1999). "What we see in the crib is the greatest mind that has ever existed, the most powerful learning machine in the universe" (Gopnik, Meltzoff, and Kuhl 1999). The term cognitive development refers to the process of growth and change in intellectual/mental abilities such as thinking, reasoning and understanding. It includes the acquisition and consolidation of knowledge. Infants draw on social-emotional, language, motor, and perceptual experiences and abilities for cognitive development. They are attuned to relationships between features of objects, actions, and the physical environment. But they are particularly attuned to people. Parents, family members, friends, teachers, and caregivers play a vital role in supporting the cognitive development of infants by providing the healthy interpersonal or social-emotional context in which cognitive development unfolds. Caring, responsive adults provide the base from which infants can fully engage in behaviors and interactions that promote learning. Such adults also serve as a prime source of imitation.

Cultural context is important to young children's cognitive development. There is substantial variation in how intelligence is defined within different cultures (Sternberg and Grigorenko 2004). As a result, different aspects of cognitive functioning or cognitive performance may be more highly valued in some cultural contexts than in others. Processing speed is an aspect of intelligence that is highly valued within the predominant western conceptualizations of intelligence, "Ugandan villagers associate intelligence with adjectives such as slow, careful, and active" (Rogoff and Chavajay 1995). Aspects of intelligence that have to do with social competence appear to be seen as more important than speed in some non-Western cultural contexts (Sternberg and Grigorenko 2004). Certainly, it is crucial for early childhood professionals to recognize the role that cultural context plays in defining and setting the stage for children's healthy cognitive functioning.

Research has identified a broad range of cognitive competencies and described the remarkable progression of cognitive development during the early childhood years. Experts in the field describe infants as active, motivated, and engaged learners who possess an impressive range of cognitive competencies (National Research Council and Institute of Medicine 2000) and learn through exploration (Whitehurst and Lonigan 1998). Infants demonstrate natural curiosity. They have a strong drive to learn and act accordingly. In fact, they have been described as "born to learn" (National Research Council and Institute of Medicine 2000).

2.2 Affective Domain

In 1956 Bloom and his associates came up with a taxonomy which could be used to classify cognitive learning outcomes in conjunction with the use of affective and psychomotor dimensions. The version was improved by the study done by Krathwohl & Anderson, (2000) to qualify the affective domain as one of the most important dimensions in learning. Old as it may be, the theory has been so useful in classroom teaching and learning interactions. However, for the last two decades, there has been a paradigm shift where most school curriculums reflect scantly or not at all on the integration of affective domain in their undertakings.

Sowell (2005) adds: "as important as affective learning may be, it is included infrequently in curricular" (P. 74). The reasons for this could be because national priorities have also influenced many schools to concentrate more on grade attainment. Or the fear of indoctrination through persuasion and coercion, skepticism about grading learners on affective outcomes, and the perception that affective domain objective are private matters (Krathwohl, Bloom & Masia, 1964). The affective dimensions of learning are feelings, emotions, and self-esteem. Caine and Caine (1991) note: "We do not simply learn. What we learn is influenced and organized by emotions and mind sets based on expectancy, personal biases and prejudices, degree of self-esteem, and the need for social interaction. ... [Emotions] operate on many levels, somewhat like the weather. They are ongoing, and the emotional impact of any lesson or life experience may continue to reverberate long after the specific event." (p. 82).

The affective domain contains learning skills that are predominantly related to emotional (affective) processes. The learning processes in the affective domain include being open to experience, engaging in life, cultivating values, managing oneself, and developing oneself. Within each of these general process areas are several "clusters" of specific learning skills that can be improved by means of constructive intervention and assessment. According to Rosenfield (1988), emotions have an important connection to memory; they help to store information and also trigger its recall. Caine and Caine (1991) add that, "the emotional depth and range that students have...affect their actual capacity to grasp ideas and procedures.

Similarly, content that is emotionally sterile is made more difficult to understand" (p. 58). To teach someone any subject adequately, the subject must be embedded in all the elements that give it meaning. People must have a way to relate to the subject in terms of what is personally important, and this means acknowledging both the emotional impact and their deeply held needs and drives. Our emotions are integral to learning. Combs (1982) notes that when we ignore the emotional components of any subject we teach, we actually deprive students of meaningfulness. Self-esteem also is related to the affective domain. How students feel about themselves as learners and how schools help students develop self-confidence are important components in achievement.

Caine and Caine (1991) note the importance of the school's "emotional climate" in affecting student learning; teachers need to understand that students' feelings and attitudes will be involved and will determine future learning. Because it is impossible to isolate the cognitive from the affective domain, the emotional climate in the school and classroom must be monitored on a consistent basis, using effective communication strategies and allowing for student and teacher reflection and metacognitive processes" (p. 82). In general, the entire environment needs to be supportive and marked by mutual respect and acceptance both within and beyond the classroom. When students feel good about themselves as learners, they are willing to take the risks and focus the attention necessary for further learning.

The work of Krathwohl & Anderson (2000) explains further that students are more willing to tackle tasks if they believe they can be successful. "When students feel defeated or unable to learn in schools, the problems of teaching them become very difficult. That is why many reading programs insist on early intervention before students develop negative feelings about their own abilities and about their willingness to participate and take risks in school learning" (Sowell, 2005, p. 74). On the same note Sowell (2005) examines that affective domain involves incorporating the new values within the person's existing values and making them part of that individual's philosophy.

Students' attitudes influence how they conduct themselves in class discussion, social interaction, positive preferences for activities, and citizenship. Such values ought to be cultivated in an encouraging learning environment which eventually promotes students' cognition faculties. "Because schools are social organizations, they are places where children and youth develop attitudes' (p.75). Ignoring this fact of integrating affective content in curriculum and instructional designs will lead students into becoming book wormers who cannot translate life in its potential reality. Ornstein and Hunkins (2009) insist that, "educational aims should address the intellectual (or cognitive), the social-personal (or affective), and the productive." (p. 224).

Affective learning is often contrasted with cognitive learning, which is associated with synthesis, evaluation, and comprehension of knowledge or information. However it has gained momentum as a topic of continuing study and discussion in the literature and therefore provides a test bed of measurement in and of itself, but also for new assessment tools like student response systems. How confident teachers are in carrying out the agenda of molding young generation through the active application of affective knowledge is a matter of dialogue. On one hand, schools compete to produce high scorers academically but moral decay on the other hand, of 'same so called high achievers' is on the rise. Unless measures are taken to address the importance of going back to the basics of incorporating Bloom's Taxonomy of learning in the curriculum machinery, our schools will continue to produce 'brilliant fools' whose manners and sense of professionalism are grossly questionable by the society.

The classification of affective skills presented incorporates many of the skills described in Bloom's original work. Although these earlier authors and contemporary educators generally focus more on learning objectives, cognitive learning skills, or in some contexts, psychomotor skills, the movement to learner-focused teaching/learning methods makes clear the significance of integrating learner skills across all domains. Skills in the affective domain are strongly related to student buy-in, self-management, persistence, attitudes toward assessment, and level of success. The present classification provides a valuable reference for curriculum design, facilitation, and personal growth.

According to Mayor and Cobb (2000), the affective education movement in the United States has been supplanted by socio-economical learning and character education. It should be noted that both of these would be seen as manifestations of affective education. They argue that affective education is of central importance in education, though this is not always recognized. It is important as an approach in itself but also as a dimension of all activities in schools in the curriculum and elsewhere. They insist that affective education means that the voices of children and young people in schools should be heard and responded to; they should be involved in identifying their needs, both emotional and academic. They should be encouraged to understand their emotions and those of others as well as how these relate to one another. This is a kind of education that is needed to our children today.

2.3. The Psychomotor or Kinesthetic Domain

The psychomotor domain includes physical movement, coordination, and use of the motor-skill areas. Development of these skills requires practice and is measured in terms of speed, precision, distance, procedures, or techniques in execution. Psychomotor objectives are those specific to discreet physical functions, reflex actions and interpretive movements. Traditionally, these types of objectives are concerned with the physically encoding of information, with movement and/or with activities where the gross and fine muscles are used for expressing or interpreting information or concepts. This area also refers to natural, autonomic responses or reflexes. It is interesting to note that while the cognitive taxonomy was described in 1956, and the affective in 1964, the psychomotor domain were not fully described until the 1970s.

As stated earlier, to avoid confusion, if the activity is simply something that is physical which supports another area -- affective or cognitive -- term the objective physical rather than psychomotor. Again, this goes to instructional intent. A primary example of something physical which supports specific cognitive development and skills might be looking through a microscope, and then identifying and drawing cells. Here the instructional intent of this common scientific activity is not to develop specific skilled proficiency in microscope viewing or in reproducing cells through drawing. Usually the key intent in this activity is that a physical action supports or is a vehicle for cognitive growth and furthering recognition skills. The learner is using the physical action to achieve the cognitive objectives -- identify, recognize, and differentiate varied types of cells.

If you are using a physical activity to support a cognitive or affective function, simply label it as something physical (labeling the objective as kinesthetic, haptic, or tactile is also acceptable) and avoid the term *psychomotor.* Rather labeling something psychomotor means there is a very clear educational intention for growth to occur in the psychomotor/kinesthetic domain. Certainly more complex learning objectives can be written so that they that meld 2 or 3 domains. For instance, students can gain appreciation (an affective objective) for the culture or country of origin through conducting investigations or listening to stories while learning the dances from other countries. Learning dance steps would fall under "skilled movements" in the psychomotor domain.

In order to practice justice following the Bloom's taxonomy of learning, a student is expected to be assessed on three dimensions namely; the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains. Although cognitive domain features broadly in summative testing, affective and psychomotor dimensions have an enormous contribution towards better learning outcomes. The practice of dwelling too much on cognitive assessment leaves a vacuum in students' character excellence. As a result, violence and all sorts of vices in schools are rampant nowadays and it appears schools' leaderships have failed to address the root causes of such mannerism. Combs (1982) makes a strong case for effective education by stating that unless the affective dimensions of learning are considered, education in the true sense of the word is unlikely.

Bloom's Taxonomy may be the most recognized framework in all of education. Categorizing learning objectives into cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains appeared to be common sense at the time the construct was created, and the domains both thrived and evolved over decades with many applications and revisions. Benjamin Bloom and four of his colleagues met over a period of years during the late 1940s and early 1950s as a group of educational psychologists seeking to create a framework of learning objectives as a basis for designing curricula, tests, and research.

In 1973, several other psychologists, including Bloom, also published a book on the affective domain, though an effort explicating the psychomotor domain was never published. Their work initially focused on the cognitive domain, perhaps because many at the time believed it too difficult to define, l*et al*one assess, the affective domain (Martin & Reigeluth, 1992). Over the next several decades, most educators would also focus here, as the cognitive domain served as the foundation for most of traditional education. In Bloom's Taxonomy, the cognitive domain reflects knowledge, the psychomotor domain reflects skills, and the affective domain reflects attitudes.

Although educators and researchers recognize the value and importance of the affective domain to student success (Furst, 1981; Griffith & Nguyen, 2006; Martin & Reigeluth, 1992), it is the least applied and least understood of the taxonomy trilogy. Knowledge and skills are easier to understand and apply in the educational process; the affective domain reflects the world of feelings, values, appreciation, motivation, and attitudes—factors much more difficult to understand and assess. Teachers should attempt to construct more holistic lessons by using all 3 domains in constructing learning tasks. This diversity helps to create more well-rounded learning experiences and meets a number of learning styles and learning modalities. Using more diversity in delivering lessons also helps students create more neural networks and pathways thus aiding recall. This study therefore, examines the Bloom's taxonomy of learning dimensions during teaching and learning transaction.

2.4. Theoretical Framework

The study was underpinned by Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory (SLT). This theory came into existence in the 1960s and it was later developed into the Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) in 1986. The SCT posits that learning occurs in a social context with a dynamic and reciprocal interaction of the person, environment, and behaviour. Social-learning theory (Rotter, 1954) postulates that, " the theory is social in nature because it stresses the fact that the major basic modes of behaving are learned in social situations and are inextricably fused with needs requiring for their satisfaction the mediation of other person" (p. 84). It is through these theoretical frame works, affective knowledge can well be practiced by appreciating oneself values while adapting and accommodating different views of others.

Kabiru and Njenga (2009) points out that, children learn in their environment as they interact and observe those living in that same environment (Kabiru and Njenga, 2009). The unique feature of SCT is the emphasis on social influence and

its emphasis on external and internal social reinforcement. The SCT considers the unique way in which individuals acquire and maintain behaviour, while also considering the social environment in which individuals perform the behaviour. The theory takes into account a person's past experiences, which factor into whether behavioral action will occur. These past experiences influences reinforcements, expectations, and expectancies, all of which shape whether a person will engage in a specific behaviour and the reasons why a person engages in that behaviour.

The goal of SCT is to explain how people regulate their behaviour through control and reinforcement to achieve goal-directed behaviour that can be maintained over time. With the implementation of external and internal factors, people regulate their behaviour from a combination of both cognitive processes and environmental manipulation. The theory presents four factors that affect observation learning and these are: attention, retention, production and motivation. If past reinforcements have led someone to pay attention to a model, then future reinforcements would selectively engage in a behaviour that was observed and finally repeat it over and over.

The Social Cognitive Theory is particularly relevant to this study because if learners are presented with any social environment, which in this study is friendly learning environment, they would analyze it then model by paying attention to those aspects that provide the friendliness. When the school, which forms the learning environment is safe, caters for all categories of learners, is gender-responsive, is health providing and has a community that supports its activities, the learners will deem it conducive for their learning. These aspects make the children motivated and are therefore likely to develop affection for the school and all other service providers in school leading to better retention. This in turn leads to the achievement of the third millennium goal which is advocating for Education for All.

Jean Piaget's (1973) theory of learning shows that knowledge is a construct of interaction between heredity and interaction. According to Piaget, a child's thinking develops in a particular sequence, thus, learning is an active process. As the child develops and constantly interacts with the world around him or her, knowledge is invented and re-invented. This means that a learner should be allowed to do his or her own learning. In this theory an emphasis is put on three dimensions namely; social participation, authentic tasks in which learning is embedded and tools to support learning. Students come to a learning situation with a variety of knowledge that exists within the student and is developed as individuals interact with their peers, teachers, and the environment.

3. Research Methodology

In order to meet the aims and objectives of the study, a descriptive research design was adopted. Descriptive study can provide information about the naturally occurring status, behavior, attitudes and/or other characteristics of a particular group. In this design, the characteristics used to describe the situations or populations in a study are usually some kind of categorical scheme also known as descriptive categories. In this study, the descriptive research design was opted for since the researcher seeks to determine the status of instructional strategies, assessment approaches and teaching/learning resources in public early childhood education centers in Uasin Gishu County in Kenya.

Research paradigm is a combination of two ideas that are related to the nature of world and the function of researcher. It helps researcher to conduct the study in an effective manner (Johnson and Christensen, 2008).The methodology of this research shares its philosophical foundation with the positivist philosophical paradigm. The positivist paradigm arose from the philosophy identified as logical positivism and is based on rigid rules of logic and measurement, truth, absolute principles and prediction (Ponterotto, 2005). The positivist philosophy argues that there is one objective reality. Therefore, as a consequence, valid research is demonstrated only by the degree of proof that can be corresponded to the phenomena that study results stand for (Krauss, 2005). In this study, such rigid qualities of a good early childhood education program lend themselves more to the quality academic aspects such as availability of sufficient teaching and learning resources, application of effective instructional strategies, competent trainers and use of effective teaching and learning resources as incorporated into this study.

The research was conducted in Uasin Gishu County. This county is one of the 47 counties of Kenya, located in the former Rift Valley Province. The city of Eldoret (capital and largest town in the county) is the county's administrative and commercial centre. It is a cosmopolitan county, covering an area of 3345.2 square kilometers. Uasin Gishu County has three main regions namely Eldoret North, Eldoret South and Eldoret East, which are further subdivided into six constituencies - Soy, Turbo, Kapseret, Kesses Ainabkoi and Moiben. Uasin Gishu County is home to 894,179 people as per the 2009 National Statistics, representing 50% male and 50% female. It is largely a cosmopolitan region, with the Nandi people of indigenous Kalenjin communities having the highest settlement. Uasin Gishu County boasts of over 775 early childhood centers, 770 primary schools, 158 secondary schools and about 15 tertiary institutions.

The target populations for this study were all the head teachers and teachers in all the public ECDE centers in Uasin Gishu County. The county has 775 public ECDE centers with 775 head teachers and 2330 teachers who were form the target population of this study. The children in the ECDE centers were not included in the study population because they can't provide information about the teaching strategies used in the centers including different classroom assessment strategies. A sample is part of the target population that has been procedurally selected to represent it (Desu, 2012). Out of the 2330 ECDE teacher in the 775 public ECDE centers in Uasin Gishu County, the researcher used Krejcie and Morgan (1970) standard sample determination formula to determine the sample size as follows:

n= N1+N(e)2

Where n is the sample size, N is the population size, and e is the level of precision. Thus, using this formula, the sample size will be determined as follows:

n= 23301+2330 (0.05)2

n= 23306.825

n=341

Thus, from a target population of 2330 ECDE teachers, using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) standard formula, the sample size at confidence level of 95% were 341 teachers. Out of all the 775 public ECDE centers in Uasin Gishu County, the study sampled 20 centers from each of the six administrative divisions. Thus, the total number of centers to be involved in the study was 120.

Sampling is the process by which researchers select a proportion of the target population, to represent the entire unit (Polit and Beck, 2013). The study utilized a five-step procedure for drawing a sample (Churchill and Lacobucci, 2002). This study adopted a stratified sampling technique to select the 20 public ECDE centers from each of the six administrative divisions in Uasin Gishu County. To sample the ECDE teachers, the study used systematic random sampling technique to select 341 teachers out of all the teachers in the selected 120 ECDE centers. All the 120 head-teachers of the 120 selected ECDE centers were included in the study sample.

A research instrument is a tool used to collect data from the researcher's respondent (Matthews and Ross, 2014). It is designed to measure knowledge attitude, feelings and/or skills of interest in a research. The researcher used a mixed method approach to collect data from the respondents. In this case, data collection was done using a combination of questionnaires, interviews and checklists. Two set of questionnaires were designed; a questionnaire for the ECDE teachers and a questionnaire for the ECDE center head-teachers. The study used a structured checklist to record data on the availability of teaching and learning resources in the centers. The checklist amassed information on the status of the outdoor play environment.

Validity is the extent to which an instrument measures what it is supposed to measure and performs as it is designed to perform (Golafshani, 2003). Face validity basically checks that the questionnaire seems to measure the concept being tested (LoBiondo-Wood and Haber, 2014) and this was assessed by getting friends to test-run the instrument to see if the questions are relevant, clear and unambiguous (Rubin and Rubin, 2011).A content validity test checks that there are enough relevant questions covering all aspects being studied and that irrelevant questions are not asked. The test is based on judgment as no objective methods exist. A panel of experts was used to evaluate the content validity of questionnaire. For construct validity, the questionnaires conformed to the theoretical expectations which have been indicated in the theoretical framework.

Reliability of a questionnaire refers to its ability to yield the same data when it is re-administered under the same conditions but it is difficult to obtain a replication of data when you are dealing with people (Cirignotta, Mondini, *et al.,* 2002). To ascertain the reliability of the questionnaire, it was subjected to Cronbach's Alpha test. Krauss, (2005) asserts that a value of 0.7 and above is high enough to ascertain that the instrument is reliable enough and having a good internal consistency. During the study the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was 0.744 and indicated the instrument was reliable.The questionnaires were pre-tested by administering it to 20 ECDE teachers in two ECDE centres in neighboring Nandi County. These centers were purposively selected for the study. The data collected were used to estimate the reliability of the instrument. Pilot test also enabled the researcher to curb some issues which may have arisen in the actual research. The pilot study was conducted in the same manner as the main study.

Before data collection, the researcher first sought permission from National Council of Science, Research and Innovation (NACOSTI). The researcher also pre-visited the 120 sampled early childhood education centers to seek permission for data collection from the school principals. The researcher gave the respondents sufficient time to accurately fill in the copies of the questionnaire the required information after which the documents were collected for data extraction and analysis. Principal's interviews were also conducted after they fill the questionnaire.

The data collected were coded and entered in a computer for analysis using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). In this case, frequency distribution and measures of central tendency including mean as well as measure of dispersion including percentages, range and standard deviation were used. Data was also presented using tables, pie charts and graphs. Qualitative data from the interviews were recorded and analyzed thematically through non-parametric analysis. The results were then be interpreted by attaching significance to the themes and the patterns observed. Alternative explanations were also considered by looking at the differences in responses recorded in data collection.

4. Results

The objective was to establish the extent to which the three domains of learning (cognitive, affective and psychomotor) considered in assessing the student in public early childhood education centers in Kenya. This was achieved by establishing the perception of teachers on the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domain of learning public early childhood education centers in Kenya.

4.1. Aware of Three Domains of Learning

The study sought to establish the awareness of ECD teachers on the three domains of learning and the findings were summarized in Figure1. Majority 303(89%) of the ECD teachers agreed that the ECD teachers were aware of three domains of learning and only 38(11%) unaware of three domains of learning.

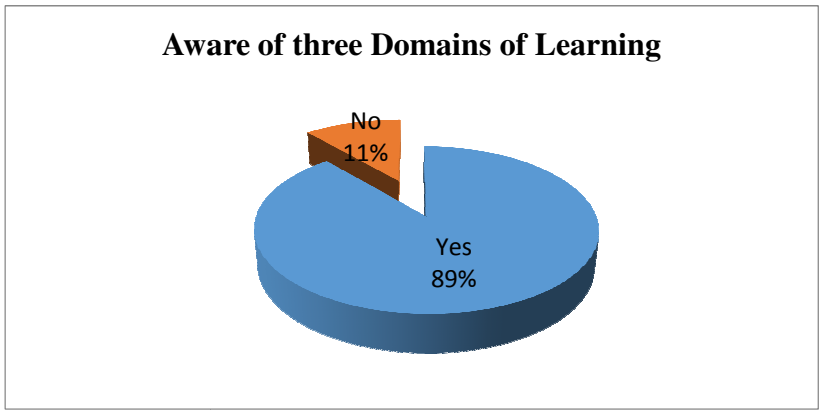

Figure 1: Aware of three domains of learning

4.2. Perception of Teachers on the Cognitive Domain of Learning

The study sought to establish the perception of teachers on the cognitive domain of learning using descriptive statistics. The ECD teachers were requested to rate their cognitive approaches including the educating the pupils on the ability to specify ideas, compare facts, make decisions and criticize ideas. This was important in order to assess how the teachers perceived the cognitive learning approach during instructional process as summarized in Table 1. The response on the perception of ECD teachers about cognitive approach of learning in ECE centers showed that, most of the teachers 168(49.6%) agreed that teachers educate pupils on the ability to specify facts and 98(28.7%) strongly agreed, with 45(13.2%) strongly disagree, while 6.5% disagree and only 1(2.1%) of teachers were undecided. This finding indicates that the teachers educated children on the ability to specify facts or ideas about different educational phenomenon.

Most of the teachers 156(45.7%) agreed that teachers educate pupils rephrasing or summarizing and 94(27.6%) strongly agreed, with 28(8.2%) strongly disagree, while 6.7% disagree and only 40(11.7%) of teachers were undecided. This finding indicates that the teachers educated children on ability to rephrase, summarize or isolate events or ideas. Majority of the teachers 149(43.7%) agreed that teachers educate pupils to consider and weigh options and 79(23.2%) strongly agreed, with 70(20.5%) strongly disagree, while 5.3% disagree and only 25(7.3%) of teachers were undecided. This finding indicates that the teachers teach children the ability to consider and weigh all facts of a given situation.

Teachers educate students on…	**Strongly Agree**		**Agree**		**Undecided**		**Disagree**		**Strongly Disagree**	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Ability to specify facts	98	28.7	169	49.6	7	2.1	22	6.5	45	13.2
Rephrasing or summarizing	94	27.6	156	45.7	40	11.7	23	6.7	28	8.2
Consider and weigh	79	23.2	149	43.7	25	7.3	18	5.3	70	20.5
Make decisions	90	26.4	89	26.1	65	19.1	31	9.1	66	19.4

Table 1: Perception of ECD teachers on cognitive approach of learning in ECE centers

Most of the teachers 90(26.4%) strongly agreed that teachers taught the ability to make decision, pass judgment, assess, criticize, and/or defend a view and 89(26.1%) agreed, with 66(19.4%) strongly disagree, while 9.1% disagree and only 65(19.1%) of teachers were undecided. This finding indicates that the teachers taught on the ability to make decision, pass judgment, assess, criticize, and/or defend a view. The teachers agreed that they educated children on the ability to specify facts or ideas about different educational phenomenon, the ability to consider and weigh all facts of a given situation, prepared their learners to rephrase summarize or isolate facts and taught the ability to make decision, pass judgment, assess, criticize, and/or defend a view. This can happen to students at both primary and tertiary levels of education (Sorden, 2005). . If a teacher is convinced that a child is not good in the any of the three domains, it is likely that the child will become fearful and end up lacking the enthusiasm to generate new ideas to add to that which is being taught in the classroom.

4.3. Perception of ECD Teachers on Affective Domain of Learning

The study sought to establish the perception of teachers on affective domain of learning using descriptive statistics. The ECD teachers were requested to rate their affective domain during classroom instruction. This was important in order to

assess how the teachers perceived the affective domain during instructional process. The affective domain rated included: learning considers pupil's characteristics such as ability to show positive values and attitudes naturally; ability to add new ideas or values to what they have learnt in class; the ability to reject or accept ideas naturally and ability to make decisions and pass judgment among others. Similarly, just like the cognitive domain of learning, mixed perceptions were observed as far as affective learning is concerned (Table 2). Most of the teachers 140(41.1%) agreed that they educate pupils on the ability to specify facts and 63(18.5%) strongly agreed, with 72(21.1%) strongly disagree, while 6.2% disagree and only 45(13.2%) of teachers were undecided. This finding indicates that students' values, attitudes or ideas have not become characteristics of the learner in such a way that they act on them naturally.

Most of the teachers 111(32.6%) agreed that teachers believe that students do not add new ideas or values, and possibly lack the ability to isolate or compare a number of events or ideals and 52(15.2%) strongly agreed, with 50(14.2%) strongly disagree, while 10.3% disagree and only 93(27.3%) of teachers were undecided. This finding indicates that teachers believe that students do not add new ideas or values, and possibly lack the ability to isolate or compare a number of events or ideals.

	Strongly Agree		**Agree**		**Undecided**		**Disagree**		**Strongly Disagree**	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Students values	63	18.5	140	41.1	45	13.2	21	6.2	72	21.1
Students do not add new ideas	52	15.2	111	32.6	93	27.3	35	10.3	50	14.7
Students have ability to consider	73	21.4	114	33.4	71	20.8	23	6.7	60	17.6
Have ability to make decision	82	24.0	124	36.4	61	17.9	32	9.4	42	12.3

Table 2: Perception of ECD teachers on affective approach of learning in ECE centers in Uasin Gishu County

Majority of the teachers 114(33.4%) agreed that students have the ability to reject or accept ideas and 73(21.4%) strongly agreed, with 60(17.6%) strongly disagree, while 9.4% disagree and only 71(20.8%) of teachers were undecided. This finding indicates that students have the ability to reject or accept ideas and weigh all facts of a given situation. Most of the teachers 82(24%) strongly agreed that their teaching gave the pupils the ability make decisions and pass judgment and 124(36.4%) agreed, with 42(12.3%) strongly disagree, while 9.4% disagree and only 61(17.9%) of teachers were undecided. This finding indicates that their teaching gave the pupils the ability make decisions and pass judgment. As a protagonist, the child is understood as having an innate desire to discover, learn, and make sense of the world (Hewett, 2001).

From the findings the students' values, attitudes or ideas have not become characteristics of the learner in such a way that they act on them naturally. The teachers believe that students do not add new ideas or values, and possibly lack the ability to isolate or compare a number of events or ideals. This implies that majority of the teachers supposed that in their learning, students do not add new ideas or values and lack the ability to isolate or compare events or ideas. Students have the ability to reject or accept ideas and were able to add new ideas to their learning. The teaching gave the pupils the ability make decisions and pass judgment. ECDE teachers are mostly focused on training pupils on the ability to reject or accept ideas as well as to make decision and pass judgments through affective domain of learning approach (Li, 2012).

4.4. Perception of ECD Teachers on Psychomotor Domain of Learning

The study sought to establish the perception of teachers on psychomotor domain of learning using descriptive statistics. The ECD teachers were requested to rate their psychomotor domain during classroom instruction. This was important in order to assess how the teachers perceived the psychomotor domain during instructional process. The psychomotor domain encompasses discreet physical functions, reflex actions and interpretive movements. ECD teachers were asked if students engage in playful learning tasks and whether their school had diverse psychomotor learning tools as shown in Table 3.

Majority of the teachers 194(56.9%) strongly agreed that students engage in playful learning tasks and 71(20.8%) agreed, with 25(7.3%) strongly disagree, while 7.9% disagree and only 24(7%) of teachers were undecided. This finding indicates that Students engage in playful learning tasks. Most of the teachers 130(38.1%) agreed that schools have diverse psychomotor tools and 113(33.1%) strongly agreed, with 33(9.7%) strongly disagree, while 4.1% disagree and only 51(15%) of teachers were undecided. This finding indicates that schools have diverse psychomotor tools.

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Students engage in playful learning tasks	194	56.9	71	20.8	24	7.0	27	7.9	25	7.3
The school have a diverse psychomotor tools	113	33.1	130	38.1	51	15.0	14	4.1	33	9.7

Table 3: Perception of ECD teachers on psychomotor approach of learning in ECE centers in Uasin Gishu County

From the results students engage in playful learning tasks and schools had diverse psychomotor learning tools. It's only after a child has had an opportunity observe and approximate a new skill, and practice it with the help of more capable peers, that they eventually incorporate it into their own cognitive constructs (Mallory *et al.,*. 1994).

4.5. Frequency of Learner Assessment

The purpose of this study was to ascertain if holistic developmentally appropriate assessment of instructional outcomes was carried out in early childhood education centers in Kenya. This was establishing the frequency of learner assessment, the assessment approaches used, the reasons for using and not using the assessment approaches, usefulness of the assessment approaches and the assessors involved.

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Daily	218	63.9	63.9
Weekly	82	24.0	88.0
Monthly	35	10.3	98.2
Annually	6	1.8	100.0
Total	341	100.0	

Table 4: Frequency of learner assessment by ECD teachers in Uasin Gishu County

On learner assessment, majority 218(63.9%) of respondents reportedly assess learners daily, compared to 82(24%) who do it weekly and 35(10.3%) do it monthly and only 6(1.8%) conducted assessments annually. The learner was assessed by ECD teachers in Uasin Gishu County on daily basis. This concurs with Wortham, (2013) that assessments provide valuable information for planning whole-group and individualized instruction, for determining program quality, and for communicating with others.

4.6 Reasons for Learner assessment

During the study the respondents identified various reasons for learner assessment as summarized in Table 5. At least 162(47.5%) identified the reasons for assessment was for teaching purposes, while 145(42.5%) believed that assessment was for learning purposes. Only 27(7.9%) conducted assessment during planning a programme for a child and the least 7(2.1%) did assessment for funding purposes.

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Seeking Funding Purposes	7	2.1	2.1
Teaching Purposes	162	47.5	49.6
Learning Purposes	145	42.5	92.1
When Planning a programme for a child	27	7.9	100.0
Total	341	100.0	

Table 5: Reasons for learner assessment

This implies that reasons for assessment was for teaching, learning purposes, during planning a programme for a child and for funding purposes. This agrees with McLachlan, Fleer, et al., (2013) & Wortham and Hardin, (2015) that there are various reasons why children in ECE centers undergo assessments; among these is the desire to know how well children are learning, if they are making progress and meeting proficiency benchmarks, and whether they are being taught effectively.

4.7. Reasons for assessing the ECD pupils

Teachers were asked to indicate why the different assessment approaches were used. The results are shown on Figure 2.

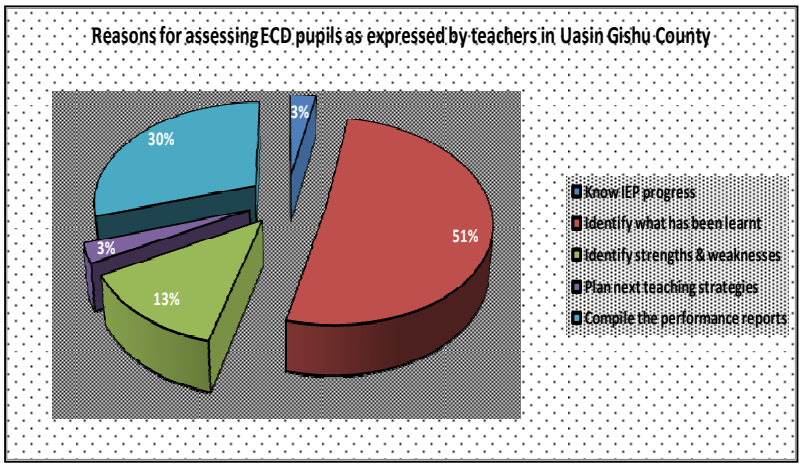

Figure 2: Reasons for assessing the ECD pupils

Further results indicates that majority of the ECD teachers in ECE centres in Uasin Gishu County assess students in order to identify whether the students understand what has been learnt in class 174(51%). This is followed closely by the need by the teachers to compile the performance reports of each student which stand at 102(30%). On the other hand, very few teachers 44(12.9%) assess students to identify their strengths and weaknesses in different activities within the school curricula which is very important to be given much attention for every student to perform better in all aspects of learning. This agrees with Mindes and Jung, (2014) assessment be used for decision-making regarding teaching and learning, identifying children's needs, and improving education and intervention programs. Also concurs with Harms, Clifford, *et al.,* (2014) that that assessment provide information that is useful for intervention. Teachers are expected to use assessment results to adapt and individualize curricula and teaching approaches and to communicate with families.

5. Conclusion

On learning domains, a significant number of ECDE teachers reported being aware of the three main domains of learning, that is cognitive, affective and psychomotor. Majority of the teachers were unable to specify or cite a specific domain of learning, an indication that in most ECDE teachers in Uasin Gishu are not fully acquainted with learning domains. Most teachers concurred that they should educate students on the ability to specify facts or ideas about different educational phenomenon; ability to rephrase, summarize, isolate and compare number of events, and the ability to consider and weigh all facts given.

The psychomotor domain encompasses discreet physical functions, reflex actions and interpretive movements. Two main activities i.e. engagement on playful learning activities and access to diverse but unspecified psychomotor learning tools were the main psychomotor approaches used by the teachers in ECDE centres in Uasin Gishu County. Results indicated that >70% of the preschool teachers surveyed have favorable perception of the two activities. The study did not explore other available psychomotor learning approaches that could be important in improving service delivery in ECDE centres in Uasin Gishu County.

A significant number of preschool teachers reported being aware of the three domains of learning, majority of them were unable to state a specific learning domain, suggesting that preschool teachers in Uasin Gishu County may not be fully familiar with learning domains. However, their perceptions of the different aspects of each domain were such that some teachers agreed that they would use them during classroom instruction, some disagreed, and others were undecided altogether.

6. Recommendations

- Continuous training and constant evaluation of ECDE teachers in Uasin Gishu County with a special focus on instructional strategies and encapsulation of the three domains of learning in all the ECDE centres.
- It is important for teachers to understand that assessment of learning should be used primarily for assessing what the learner has learned and must be conducted as frequent as possible.

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