

## **THE SOCIAL DYNAMICS INVOLVED IN THE PLACEMENT OF JHS AND PRIMARY TRAINED TEACHERS IN KINDERGARTEN: THE CASE OF SQUARE PEGGS IN ROUND HOLES IN THE WESTERN REGION OF GHANA**

### **ABSTRACT**

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This study provides an overview of the reasons teachers are assigned kindergarten classes to teach in four selected districts in the Western Region namely: Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan Assembly (STMA), Effia kwesimintsim Municipal Assembly (EKMA), Ahanta West Municipal (AWM) and Wasa East District (WED). The study employed thirty (30) kindergarten teachers from each district, five (5) head teachers from each district and two (2) officers responsible for HR from each district. The purposive sampling technique was used in selecting the sample for the study. Questionnaires and interviews were used to collect data from the respondents. The purpose of the study was to ascertain the sociological variables that account for placement of teachers to teach in kindergarten classes. Simple frequencies and percentages were used in analysing the findings. The study concluded among others that most of the teachers teaching at the kindergarten were not trained in Early Childhood Education. This was due to the fact that, considerable number of head-teachers do not find out the areas of specialization of teachers posted to their school before assigning them the kindergarten classes to teach and the reservation of the kindergarten for the 'newest' member on the staff syndrome.

**Key words:** Teacher placement, Kindergarten, Early Childhood Education

### **INTRODUCTION**

The placement of junior high school (JHS) and primary-trained teachers in kindergarten classrooms is common due to shortages of specialized kindergarten teachers. However, early childhood education requires specific pedagogical skills and knowledge of developmentally appropriate practices that JHS and primary teachers may lack (Wolf et al., 2019). Developmentally appropriate kindergarten teaching involves play-based, child-centered methods that differ from approaches in higher grade teaching (National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education [NAECS/SDE], 2001). Misplacement of teachers trained at other levels into kindergarten classrooms may limit the effectiveness of early learning (Wolf et al., 2019; NAECS/SDE, 2001).

Starting any activity demands a firm and solid foundation to support add-ups. It is very necessary to have the right foundation and start, whatever venture, be it business, family life, religion; it deserves to have the right foundation. Just as Balchan (2017) puts it that if a building is to reach great heights, it must have a foundation that is dug deep and built strong. If we are to reach great heights, we need the same thing (deep and strong foundation). The education system being run in any country also needs to have a solid rock upon which it should be built. Without the right start, an education system will be bereft of its intended purpose. Just as the education system must be structured on a robust beginning, so it is with the pupils who are to go through the system.

Children are to start their education on a firm foundation as recognized and suggested by the Children's Act, 1998 of Ghana (Act 560) that there should be Early Childhood Care and Development programmes which when implemented in an integrated manner will provide pupils with holistic development and strong foundation for Ghana's human resource development. It is against this backdrop that Ghana's 2008 Educational Reforms as outlined by Act 778 made provision for kindergarten to be part of the mainstream basic education (primary and the junior

high school) in order to give room for Early Childhood Education. With this provision in the 2008 Educational Reform, the school going age for the Ghanaian child changed from six (6) to four (4) years.

The inclusion of kindergarten in the basic schools also led to colleges of education and some universities in Ghana to start preparing and training teachers in Early Childhood Education. With the introduction of Early Childhood Education in the colleges of education which feed the public basic schools with trained and professional teachers, teacher trainees are trained in the content with regards to the kindergarten and early stages of the education ladder, from basic one to basic three. Teacher trainees are also trained in the methods, strategies, techniques and the relevant approaches in handling pupils at that stage. Another advantage of the Early Childhood program in the colleges of education and the universities is how teacher trainees are taken through the science and arts of designing and preparing teaching and learning materials suitable and relevant to the content and pupils at the kindergarten.

Since 2011, the colleges of education in Ghana running Early Childhood programs have been producing teachers trained in Early Childhood Education who are meant for the kindergarten and primary one to six. With their rich and enormous knowledge, skills and pedagogy, they are to be assigned to handle the kindergarten. Unfortunately, most of the kindergarten classes in most of the districts in the Western Region of Ghana, are filled with teachers not trained in Early Childhood Education. It is upon this observation that this study seeks to throw light on reasons teachers in the district are assigned the kindergarten classes to teach irrespective of their areas of specialisations.

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Placing JHS and primary-trained teachers in kindergarten often creates a mismatch between teachers' preparation and the needs of young children, producing a "square peg in a round hole" scenario. These teachers may not feel adequately prepared, which can lead to ineffective teaching strategies and impact children's developmental and learning outcomes negatively (Wolf et al., 2019; NAECS/SDE, 2001). Despite the prevalence of this practice, there is limited research capturing the challenges experienced by such teachers and the impact on pupil learning in kindergarten settings specific to Ghana and comparable contexts (Wolf et al., 2019; Tandfonline, 2025).

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The following questions guided the study:

1. To what extent do teachers' demographic characteristics influence their placement in kindergarten?
2. Does teachers' interest in teaching at the kindergarten level influence their placement to teach there?
3. What are the reasons for which teachers are assigned kindergarten classes to teach?

### **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This study addresses a critical gap in ensuring quality early childhood education by examining the teacher placement mismatch—a factor influencing educational outcomes (Wolf et al., 2019). The findings can guide policymakers and education stakeholders toward more effective teacher deployment strategies in Ghana and highlight the need for early childhood-specific training in teacher education curricula (NAECS/SDE, 2001). It may also aid in developing targeted professional development to support teachers navigating this placement challenge. (International Journal of Research & Innovative Social Science, 2024).

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

The first two years of the Ghanaian child in school are spent at the kindergarten where he or she will receive Early Childhood Education which will prepare him or her enough to have a sound beginning in life as Donaldson, Grieve, et al (1983) puts it that Early Childhood is a period of momentous significance for all people growing up (in our culture). By the time this period is over, children will have formed conceptions of themselves as social beings, as thinkers, and as language

users, and they will have reached certain important decisions about their abilities and their own worth. The Early Childhood Education prepares pupils at the kindergarten socially, psychologically, emotionally, morally and academically for actual schoolwork as Barnett (2006) sheds light on the benefits of Early Childhood Education in the intellectual and cognitive development of the child in the long run.

In Ghana, kindergarten serves as the bridge between the home and the school. Early Childhood Education provided at the kindergarten does not only help the child but goes a long way to help the country. Momentum (2005) supports this assertion with a reason that every Dollar spent in Early Childhood Education (ECE) saves \$13 in future years – high quality ECE helps prepare young children to succeed in school and become better citizens: they earn more, pay more taxes and commit fewer crimes. Campbell and Craig (1994) provided evidence of the positive benefits gained by adults with background in Early Childhood Education vis-à-vis their counterparts who never had Early Childhood Education.

The good intention of the state to provide Early Childhood Education to its young citizens did not just end with the introduction of the kindergarten; it called for training of specialist teachers in Early Childhood Education to handle the new curriculum as pointed out by the OECD Teachers' Review (2005) that education systems need to invest in intensive teacher education and training if teachers are to deliver high-quality outcomes. The running of Early Childhood Education in basic schools cannot be entrusted in the hands of teachers with no knowledge in that field if the country wants to achieve the set target for the program.

A Literature Review on the Outcomes of Early Childhood Education (2008) suggests that qualified teachers are likely to draw on their knowledge and experience of children and pedagogy to offer the kinds of cognitively challenging adult-child interactions that are linked with gains for children. This gives the idea that it is very crucial and necessary to get professionals with the technical know-how. Mbugua (2009) makes it clear that the training of Early Childhood Development and Education teachers remains a priority in the recognition of the vital role well-trained professionals play in the quality of Early Childhood experiences for children ages 0+ to 5+. The employment and use of specialised teachers in early childhood education is key in ensuring the success of the program. Litjens and Taguma (2010) say there is strong evidence that enriched stimulating environment and high-quality pedagogy are fostered by better qualified staff; and better-quality pedagogy leads to better learning outcomes.

Plans were made for some of the colleges of education in the country to start running early childhood education programmes in the year 2008 which led to awarding of Diploma in Early Childhood Education as other colleges of education focused on general programmes while others ran other specialised programs like Technical, Mathematics and Science education. The University of Cape Coast and University of Education, Winneba also started programs in Early Childhood. This was with the intention to produce specialist teachers which Boscariol and Neden (2008) defined as teachers who have training in a specific discipline and prepared to be able to teach effectively in that area. These specialized teachers were awarded Diploma and Bachelor Degrees in Early Childhood Education and were to be assigned the kindergarten and lower primary classes to teach.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The study adopted the Human Capital Theory and some aspects of Specialization and Role Fit Theory in explaining the social dynamics that account for placement of kindergarten teachers.

### **Constructivist Education in Kindergarten Classrooms**

Discussing constructivist education, Thompson & Boro (2015) assessed that Teaching and learning in classrooms are grounded in the understanding that young children actively construct knowledge by building on their existing understanding within both physical and social contexts. This assertion is also held by DeVries and Zan (1994) who opined that by integrating prior experiences with new ones, children can recognize patterns and trends, aiding their comprehension

of the surrounding world. Constructivist education, therefore, fosters learning environments that consider children's interests and provide opportunities for experimentation and collaboration as they engage with assigned tasks (Kamii & DeVries, 1993).

Thompson & Boro (2015) by analyzing the constructivist principles in kindergarten outlined that teachers committed to constructivist principles must deeply understand their roles throughout the teaching and learning process. According to them, those accustomed to teaching methods centered on dictating and directing children's activities do not fit within constructivist settings. To remain relevant, such teachers should shift from being sole knowledge providers to facilitators who allow children to actively engage in diverse activities, helping them derive meaning from their experiences (DeVries, 1993). In constructivist classrooms, teachers guide rather than dictate, supporting young learners in constructing their own knowledge.

### **Constructivist Teaching Principles in Kindergarten Classrooms**

- Children learn best when they actively engage in hands-on activities rather than passively receiving information.
- Teaching builds on children's existing knowledge and experiences, helping them connect new concepts to what they already understand.
- Learning is often a social process, so collaboration and communication among peers are encouraged to enhance understanding.
- Teachers act as guides or facilitators, providing support and scaffolding as children explore and construct knowledge independently.
- Opportunities are provided for children to experiment, discover, and explore their environment in meaningful ways.
- Children are encouraged to think about their experiences and the processes they used to solve problems or complete tasks.
- Instruction is adapted to meet the diverse needs, interests, and developmental levels of each child.
- Learning activities are often interdisciplinary and connected to real-life situations to make learning relevant and coherent.

(Kamii, C., & DeVries, R. 1993; DeVries, R., & Zan, B. 1994)

### **Human Capital Theory**

This theory explains that investing in the right skills and education of individuals enhances their productive capacities and job-effectiveness in a given role (Becker, 1964). This theory is relevant to the postings and placement of teachers in classrooms. Applying this to teacher placement in kindergarten, ensuring that teachers have the appropriate training, qualifications, and experience specific to early childhood education and maximizes their capacity to provide quality instruction and foster children's development. Posting teachers without relevant qualifications or interest reduces the human capital value in the kindergarten setting, potentially leading to lower educational outcomes.

### **Specialization and Role Fit Theory**

This framework emphasizes matching individuals' skills, interests, and qualifications with the roles they perform for maximum efficiency and satisfaction (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). In kindergarten teaching, assigning teachers specialized in early childhood education or related fields to kindergarten classes aligns with their competencies, leading to better engagement, satisfaction, and performance. Misalignment (e.g., posting untrained or disinterested teachers) can result in lowered motivation and poorer teaching quality, which negatively impacts children's learning and overall classroom environment. These theories therefore explain why careful consideration of teacher qualifications, specialization, and preferences in kindergarten placement is crucial for optimizing teaching effectiveness, teacher satisfaction, and early childhood learning outcomes.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The design used for this study was the descriptive research design which specifies the nature of a given phenomenon. It observes, describes and documents situation as it naturally occurs. Descriptive research design is an invaluable tool for understanding the characteristics and trends of a population or phenomenon. By employing methods such as surveys, observations, and secondary data analysis, researchers can gather rich, detailed insights that inform decision-making and guide further studies (Creswell, J. H. 2018). Since the study sought to describe the situation, background training and reasons with which teachers are given the kindergarten classes to teach, the descriptive research design was used. The study made use of questionnaire and interview as instruments for collecting information from respondents. The questionnaire was used due to its cost effectiveness, reachability, assurance of anonymity, consistency and uniformity in questions and the opportunity for respondents to complete it at their own reasonable convenience within a specified period (Babbie, E. 2020; Creswell, J. W. 2018). The questionnaires were administered to teachers teaching at the kindergarten. Interview schedule was used for the headteachers and the human resource officers in the district offices to reinforce the data collected through questionnaires.

The target population for the study was kindergarten teachers, head teachers of basic schools and HR personnel in the four selected districts namely: Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan Assembly (STMA), Effia Kwesimintsim Municipal Assembly (EKMA), Ahanta West Municipal (AWM) Wassa East District (WED). Sample size was 148 computed as follows:

**Table 1: Sample and Sampling Technique**

Subject	Sample size	Technique
Headteachers	20 (5x4)	Purposive
KG Teachers	120 (30x 4)	Simple random
HR personnel	8 (2x 4)	purposive
<b>Total</b>	<b>148</b>	

Table 1 gives detailed information of subject, sample size and sampling technique used for the study. Purposive technique was used to select 20 headteachers, five from each district. The bulk of the subject was selected from the KG teachers who constituted 81% of the entire population. The significant proportion of the teachers is an indication that they are the most influential group as far as this study was concerned. Views of headteachers (20) and HR personnel (8) from the district offices were taken to confirm or disconfirm the responses from the teacher respondents.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Discussion was done based on two broad areas namely; Demographic characteristics of respondents and the placement of kindergarten teachers. Demographic characteristics consisted of; number of teachers, gender, age, number of years in teaching, academic qualification and area of specialization. Major issues dealt with under placement includes; teachers' acceptance of class, teachers' wish to change class, reasons assigned by headteacher for placing students in kindergarten.

### Demographic Characteristics

Table 1 outlines key demographic characteristics such as gender, age, years of teaching experience, academic qualifications, and area of specialization. Most of the respondents appear to be fairly diverse across these categories. The details are discussed below.

**Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

Characteristic	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>TEACHER RESPONDENTS</b>		
<b>Number of teachers</b>		
KG1	72	60



KG2	28	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Gender of Respondents</b>		
Male	12	10
Female	108	90
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Age of Respondents</b>		
Below 30 years	54	45
30-35 years	30	25
36-45 years	0	0
46-50 years	12	10
Above 50 years	24	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Number of years in teaching</b>		
Below 6 years	60	50
6-15 years	30	25
16-25 years	6	5
26-30 years	0	0
Above 30 years	24	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Academic qualification of teachers</b>		
Senior High/Secondary School	6	5
Teachers Cert 'A'	18	15
Diploma in Basic Education	72	60
Bachelor Degree in Education	24	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Teachers' area of specialization</b>		
Early childhood education	18	15
Social studies	25	20.8
Science	2	1.7
Literature in English	2	1.7
Ghanaian Language	6	5
Catering	30	25
Clothing and Textiles	21	17.5
Mathematics	8	6.6
Technical	3	2.5
Others	5	4.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 1 indicates that the respondents were all teachers teaching at the kindergarten as 60% were teaching at KG 1 and 40% were teachers teaching at KG 2. Again, the gender distribution of the respondents that, majority of teachers who taught at the kindergarten were females representing 90% of the respondents whilst 10% represented the male respondents. The age distribution shown in Table 1 indicates that majority of the respondents were below 30 years as represented by 45%. This was followed by the age bracket 30 – 35 represented by 25%. Respondents above 50 years represented 20% of the total whilst 10% of the respondents were in the age bracket of 46 – 50.

The teaching experience distribution of the respondents. 50% of the respondents had been in the teaching service for less than 6 years. This represented majority of the respondents in this category. This was followed by respondents with 6 – 15 years teaching experience represented by

25% of the total. 5% of the respondents were in the bracket of 16 – 25. Teachers with teaching experience above 30 years were represented by 20%.

The academic qualifications of respondents are as well captured in Table 1 which indicates that majority (60%) of the respondents have Diploma in Basic Education Certificate. The rest of them includes: Bachelor Degree in Education (20%); Teacher's Cert 'A' (15%); Senior High/Secondary School Certificate (5%).

Distribution of teacher's area of specialization is also indicated in Table 1. It was clear from Table 1 that 15% of the respondents had specialized in Early Childhood Education. 17.5% of the respondents had also specialized in Clothing and Textiles. 20.8% had also specialized in Social Studies. 25% of the respondents had also specialized in Catering as 15% had also specialized in a Ghanaian Language. The remaining 13.3% had specialized in 'other' areas (Mathematics and Technical). What is shown in this result is that, most respondents are not trained in Early Childhood Education. This is a situation which calls for urgent attention. Hobbs (2015) hit the nail on the head by alluding to the fact that shortages of subject specialist teachers, too often, teachers are having to teach subjects they do not know about.

The table reflects a teaching workforce that is predominantly female, relatively young, but with a mix of both new and very experienced teachers. Most teachers hold diploma-level education qualifications, with a wide variety of specialization areas but a particular concentration in Ghanaian Language, Social studies, and Early childhood education. This demographic profile provides valuable insight into the educational background and specialization trends among teachers in KG1 and KG2. Understanding these characteristics can help in tailoring professional development programs and educational resources to suit teachers' qualifications, experience, and the areas they teach

Teacher demographic factors such as age, gender, academic qualification, and years of teaching experience influence teacher effectiveness, instructional quality, and student outcomes Francisco, 2020; Adeyemi, 2014; Sandra, 2013; Owolabi & Adebayo, 2012. Most early childhood educators are female, and specialized training in early childhood education positively affects preparedness for teaching young children WGU Career Guide, 2025; Francisco, 2020. While teachers' personal and professional demographic characteristics have some influence on student academic performance, combined effects may not always reach statistical significance Francisco, 2020.

### **Teacher's Interest and Placement**

Table 2 focuses on three thematic areas and sought answers to questions bordering on teaching areas of specialisation, teachers' acceptance of kindergarten class assigned to them, teachers' willingness to teach different classes rather than kindergarten.

**Table 2: Teachers Interest and their Placement in Kindergarten**

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Headteacher discusses teachers' area of specialization before assigning class		
Yes	50	41.7
No	70	58.3
Total	120	100
Teachers readily accept the KG class assigned them		
Yes	20	16.7
No	100	83.3
Total	120	100
Teachers wish to teach different class rather than the KG		
Yes	80	66.7
No	40	33.3
Total	120	100
Headteacher gives reasons for assigning teachers to teach in		

KG		
Yes	90	75
No	30	25
Total	120	100

From Table 2, 50% of the respondents made it clear that their head-teachers discussed with them their areas of specialization before assigning them to kindergarten class to teach. 70% of the respondents on the other hand indicated that their head teachers did not discuss with them their areas of specialization before assigning them the kindergarten class to teach. All the respondents according to Table 2 readily accepted to teach the kindergarten class assigned them.

Majority of the respondents represented by 66.7% wished to teach a different class apart from the kindergarten. A third of the respondent represented by 33.3% however wished to be assigned a kindergarten class to teach. That third of the respondents represent those kindergarten teachers who do not have interest teaching at the upper primary and JHS.

With reference to headteachers giving reasons for classification, one-fourth of the respondents represented by 25% said their headteachers did not give them any reason for assigning them kindergarten classes to teach. 75% of them said their head-teachers gave them reason(s) for assigning them kindergarten to teach. Teacher placement considering specialization and preferences is linked to higher job satisfaction and better educational outcomes (WGU Career Guide, 2025). However, teacher dissatisfaction with assignments may be due to lack of consultation or mismatch of interests and qualifications, affecting morale and learning quality (Francisco, 2020).

### Interview with Headteachers

Headteachers were interviewed to ascertain their views on how newly trained teachers are placed in the classroom to teach and also to confirm or disconfirm some of the responses given by the teachers. The major question item posed to the headteachers focused on reasons used to assign teachers to kindergarten classes to teach. The headteachers were given the opportunity to select from the eight (8) major reasons as many as applicable to their situation. They were also asked to give additional reasons peculiar to their jurisdiction.

Views of the headteachers are represented in Table 3 below.

**Table 3: Reasons Head Teachers Use to Assign Teachers to Kindergarten**

Reason	Responses	Percentage (%)
Being new on the staff	17	85
Due to old age	6	30
Being a female	15	75
Being a nursing mother	10	50
Being a pupil (untrained) teacher	9	45
Being trained in Early Childhood Education	5	25
That was the only vacant class available	16	80
At teacher's own request	9	45
Headteachers discretion	18	90

What are the reasons that inform headteachers to assign teachers to teach in kindergarten? This is one of the critical questions that underpinned the study. The respondents identified eight main reasons for assigning teachers to kindergarten. These include: being new on the staff (85%), due to old age (30%), being a female (75%), being a nursing mother (50%), being a pupil teacher (45%), teachers' own request (45%), due to a vacant class (80%), being trained in Early Childhood Education (25%), and headteachers discretion (90%).

It is interesting to note that it is only 25% of the responses that inure to the fact that teachers are assigned to teach kindergarten because they offered Early Childhood Education in college. Majority (80%) of the views gave diverse reasons. One of the headteachers remarked that any



trained teacher from a college of education can teach at the kindergarten level so they do not consider areas of specialisation of teachers. Another headteacher said “The important thing is that there is a teacher who can fill a vacant class”. It is interesting to note that headteachers discretionary roles in the placement registered a whopping 90% responses.

This result clearly paints the picture that most of the teachers teaching at the kindergarten are not specialised and can threaten the quality of teaching and learning at that level. This assertion is supported by Chilcott (2015) who explained that, the quality of education is threatened when students are being taught by teachers not qualified in the subjects they are teaching.

### **Views Expressed by HR Persons in The Education Offices**

Eight Human Resource (HR) Officers in the four districts of the study were interviewed with respect to the reasons head teachers allude to in assigning newly trained teachers to teach in the various classrooms. Responses of the HR officers have been categorised into four main themes namely; Teacher’s qualification, School needs and staffing, Gender and Head teachers’ discretion. Teacher’s qualification was one of the reasons given by the HR persons in the district but it was not a popular reason. Only 37.5% of the respondents selected the reason. Further questions revealed that though it must be the ideal criteria to use in assigning trained teachers to class, head teachers hardly go by that. This has the tendency to affect quality teaching in the classroom. Newly trained teachers from the colleges of Education in Ghana graduate with degrees in various specialisms such as Early Grade Education, Primary Education and JHS Education. The ideal situation is to place Early Grade graduates in KG and lower Primary, Primary Education graduates in Upper Primary and JHS products in JHS 1 to 3. Unfortunately, the responses from the HR personnel in the Ghana Education District Offices claimed few of the headteachers actually consider teachers’ qualification.

Seventy five percent (75%) of the HR respondents opined that some head teachers do subject classification based on the staffing vacancy irrespective of the content area. One of them indicated that “The important thing is getting a teacher posted to the school. The head teacher can place the teacher in any vacant class room to teach”. This underscores the fact that headteachers do not want any class to be empty. No matter the area of specialization of a teacher, he or she can be placed in any class room to teach.

The teacher’s gender type also plays a role in assigning newly trained teachers. This assertion was made by some HR personnel who were interviewed. Fifty percent (50%) of the respondents expressed this view. Further probe unravelled the perception that many head teachers prefer females to teach in the KG and Lower Primary level as opposed to male teachers. One of them said that “Female teachers are good in teaching at the lower level, they are more devoted, and attached to the pupils than male teachers”

Of all the reasons given for assigning teachers to the KG and Lower Primary levels, the Head teachers’ discretion as given by the HR officers was the most popular. Eighty seven point five percent (87.5%) of the HR- respondents were of the view that headteachers exercise discretionary powers to ensure there are teachers in every class to teach at any point in time. According to the HR officers in the districts, the newly trained teachers learn to adjust within two to three weeks irrespective of their areas of specialisation, gender or subject preferences and the headteachers support them to acclimatise to their new environment. Headteachers are obliged to exercise significant discretion in teacher assignments, with the aim of balancing staff availability, teacher qualifications, gender, and other personal circumstances (Francisco, 2020; WGU Career Guide, 2025). However, Francisco, (2020) assessed that assigning teachers based on gender status may reflect institutional biases, which calls for transparent and equitable practices. WGU Career Guide (2025) further outlined that training specifically in early childhood education is critical but may be underutilized in teacher placement to kindergarten.

### **CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that most of the teachers teaching at the kindergarten were not trained in Early Childhood Education. This is due to the fact that, considerable numbers of headteachers do not find out the areas of specialization of teachers posted to their school before assigning them the kindergarten classes to teach and the reservation of the kindergarten for the ‘newest’ member on the staff syndrome. Another reason has to do with reserving the kindergarten classes for teachers of old age who are nearing retirement. There was also the reason that female teachers are more tolerant than their male counterparts so just the gender of a teacher was used as a reason to assign a teacher the kindergarten to teach. Some other reasons head-teachers used to assign teachers to kindergarten class to teach are: teachers being untrained or ‘pupil’ teachers, the teacher being a nursing mother and at the teacher’s own request. All these reasons do not put the right calibre of teachers with the needed background specialization in Early Childhood Education to handle pupils at that level. There is no denying the fact that qualified teachers are likely to draw on their knowledge on children and pedagogy to offer the kinds of cognitively challenging adult-child interactions that are linked with the gains for children. It was also discovered from the study that a considerable number of teachers teaching in the kindergarten wish to teach a different class apart from the kindergarten. The study also concluded that some headteachers do not assign teachers reasons why they are to teach at the kindergarten. Majority of the head teachers do not discuss with teachers their areas of specialization before assigning them the kindergarten class to teach. Above all, headteachers discretionary powers play a crucial role in assigning basic school teachers’ roles in kindergarten classes.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and the conclusions of the study, the following recommendations have been made: First, headteachers of basic schools must do well to find out the areas of specialization of teachers posted to their schools before assigning them to teach a particular class or subject especially, the kindergarten classes. Secondly, headteachers of basic schools must make request from the district education directorate for teachers trained in Early Childhood Education. Thirdly, headteachers of basic schools must not use ‘unprofessional’ reasons like a teacher’s gender, age, number of years a teacher has been on the staff, professional status, etc to assign a teacher to teach at the kindergarten. Fourthly, the district education directorate must attract teachers with specialization in Early Childhood Education and use various means of motivations to retain them in the district especially those posted to deprived areas. Fifthly, the district education directorate must have data on the number of teachers trained in Early Childhood Education in order for them to know how many of such teachers are in the directorate at a particular time and also ensure that they are assigned kindergarten classes to teach.

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