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# Influence of Policy Compliance on the Implementation of Pre-Primary Education in Public Primary Schools in Arusha District Council, Tanzania

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***Abstract:*** *This study assessed the influence of policy compliance on the implementation of pre-primary education in public primary schools in Arusha district council. The study assessed the effects of policy compliance on the effectiveness of pre-primary education and suggested the possible strategies for improving education on policy compliance on implementing pre-primary education in Arusha district council. Compliance Theory guided this study. The study adopted concurrent mixed methods research approach. The target population included 101 head teachers, 109 pre-primary teachers, 118 standard one teachers, 115 standard two teachers, and 1 District Education Officer (DEO), a total of 444 individuals. Sample size included 10 head teachers, 20 pre-primary teachers, 20 standard one teachers, 20 standard two teachers and 1 DEO. Questionnaire and interview guide were used for data collection. The university research supervisor ensured validity of the instruments. Questionnaires were tested for reliability in pilot study and Cronbach Alpha coefficient yielded reliability of0.756. Transferability and dependability were established through ensuring content and face validity. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics in the SPSS and frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation were used to show the level of agreement. The study revealed varying levels of compliance such as curriculum delivery, but gaps existed in teacher qualifications, infrastructure, and training. Policy compliance positively influenced children's learning, inclusivity, and teacher performance. It concluded that addressing systemic and resource challenges is vital for effective policy compliance. The study recommended improving policy coordination, increasing funding, recruiting trained teachers, enhancing assessments, integrating technology, and fostering community involvement.*

**Keywords:** *Policy, Compliance, Implementation, Pre-primary, Education, Tanzania*

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# 1. Introduction

Policy compliance and the implementation of pre-primary education are interconnected aspects. Policy compliance is the strict following of education standard regulations, rules, and levels established by the government or policy makers as an important aspect of the successful execution of educational plans, tasks and activities at all levels of education (OECD, 2024). Pre-primary education relates to uniformly early childhood teaching and learning activities that are designed to give children a structure to learn in such a way that they are gradually prepared for formal schooling (USAID, 2021). The implementation of the early childhood education depends on the education policy of the country but common teaching and learning activities are like hands-on activities, creativity, sports and games, role play, drawing, songs, and outdoor learning (ShukiaandMarobo, 2022).

In Sub-Saharan Africa, Early Childhood Education policies guide the implementation of pre-primary education. For example, in Ethiopia, National Policy Framework for Early Childhood Education provides a framework to ensure that through effective coordination and partnership, all Ethiopian children pre-birth to 6 years get quality early childhood development education services (UNICEF, 2021). The stakeholders struggle to comply with the policy framework through providing children with optimum nutrition, healthcare, protection, responsive care, and early stimulation services during early childhood would offer significant social and economic benefits (USAID, 2021). However, in Ethiopia, poverty malnutrition, toxic stress, lack of nurturing care and brain stimulation during the early years impair brain development and thus children's potential to learn (World Bank, 2022). This hinders the effective implementation of pre-primary education and limit children from reaching their full potential and becoming productive adults. Therefore, this shows that, there is need to provide the initiatives on the policy compliance for better implantation of pre-primary education.

Likewise, Uganda National Integrated Early Childhood Development Policy is multisectoral ECD framework (Neuman and Devercelli, 2021). The policy establishes standards for service delivery, monitoring access to education services and quality education (UNESCO, 2023). The stakeholders have made efforts in the provision of Early Childhood Care and Education which has significantly improved by the implementation of Universal Primary Education (UPE). Consequently, majority of 6–8-year-old children are enrolled in school, achieving gender parity in enrolment among this age group (Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, 2024). The compliance with ECD policies in Uganda is still a challenge due to delay implementation planning and allocation of financial and other resources (Pence and UNESCO, 2024). This is roadblock to policy adoption and implementation.

In Tanzania, the 2014 Education and Training Policy; 2023 Edition, provides one year of pre-primary education for children aged 5 (MoEST, 2023a). In line with the policy, the government established the Curriculum and Syllabus for Pre-Primary Education 2023 focuses on developing basic competences in culture, religious education, arts and sports, language and communication, early life skills, health and environment, early numeracy skills, as well as science, and ICT skills (MoEST, 2023b). Since the implementation of the 2014 Education and Training Policy, education stakeholders' various opinions and concerns regarding the adequacy and relevance of the policy's content and the curricula at different levels of education and training (URT, 2020). However, education stakeholders complain about the content of this policy as it does not meet the requirements of economic, social, scientific and technological changes.

In Arusha District Council, the implementation of pre-primary education in public primary schools has faced challenges despite the presence of national policies and guidelines aimed at ensuring quality early childhood education (MoEST, 2025). Research by Machumu and Mislay (2024) revealed that, many schools especially in rural areas are struggle to fully comply with policy requirements. Additionally, Ochieng and Yeonsung (2021) noted that inconsistencies in the interpretation and application of pre-primary education policies among school heads and teachers have contributed to gaps in service delivery. These issues suggest that while policy frameworks exist, their compliance and enforcement remain the challenge, eventually affecting the quality and effectiveness of pre-primary education. Although, there has been the campaigns in addressing these concerns, still there is a gap between ideally and reality in the policy compliance on the implementation of pre-primary education (UNICEF, 2020). Therefore, this study was conducted to investigate the extent to which policy compliance influences the implementation of pre-primary education in public primary schools in Arusha district council.

## 1.1 Research Questions

The study guided by the following research questions:

i. How does the level of policy compliance affect the effectiveness of pre-primary education in public primary schools in Arusha DC?
ii. What are the possible strategies for improving education policy compliance on implementing

pre-primary education in public schools in Arusha DC?

# 2. Literature Review

This study was built on Compliance Theory. Compliance theory was first proposed by sociologist Amitai Etzioni in the 1960s (Dodge, 2016).

## 2.1 Compliance Theory (CT)

The theory states that there are relationship dynamics between those who make policies, laws, rules, and regulations and those who are subjected to that power to adhere to one or all of these dimensions (Haas and Bilder, 2023). In general, compliance theory emphasises conforming to a rule, such as a specification, policy, standard, or law. The theory aspires to ensure that personnel are aware of at least the consequences and take steps to comply with the relevant laws and regulations or internal policies (Fiene, 2024). In this context, education stakeholders should comply with laws, regulations, and educational policies designed to ensure the smooth running of school activities.

### 2.1.1 Strengths of Policy Implementation Theory

Compliance theory offers a straightforward framework for understanding why compliance with rules, policies, and standards is favourable for recognizing order, consistency, and accountability in an organization (Fiene, 2022). It encourages a responsible culture, where people know the significance of following rules, regulations and guidelines in order to reach the goals of educational activities. Therefore, in educational institutions, compliance theory ensures that teaching methodologies, curriculum development processes and evaluation systems are adhered to, leading to quality education and positive learning outcomes.

### 2.1.2 Application of Policy Implementation Theory

This theory creates a framework through which the current study explores the influence of compliance with government policies, teaching guidelines, and curriculum standards on the effectiveness of pre-primary education. It assisted this study in analysing teachers and school administrators' levels of compliance and their role in influencing educational outcomes. The theory also helped to recognize challenges that are in the way of compliance and suggesting solutions to enhance education policy adherence, which further facilitates the effective implementation of pre-primary education.For example, primary schools should comply with the government's teaching and learning guidelines; they should follow how policies and curricula provide a framework for running teaching and learning activities regularly. Compliance requires adopting and implementing various activities related to the teaching and learning process, resources, and technologies. Therefore, these frameworks and guidelines ensure that the professional staffs are dedicated to compliance as well as enabling the smooth running of educational tasks**.**

## 2.2 Empirical Review

The empirical literature is reviewed in accordance with specific objectives of this study in order to synthesis the research gaps.

### 2.2.1 The Effects of Policy Compliance on Pre-Primary Education

The study conducted in Sweden by Liljestrand (2020) examined how Swedish pre-school teachers have complied with enacted pre-school policy. The analysis of interviews with 10 preschool teachers shows how local policy talk is positioned in favour of a child-centred discourse, and how different actualizations in the national curriculum change the interviewees' messages. In Nigeria, Egbeh-Ake and Eme-Osiri (2020) investigated the relationship between compliance to recruitment policies and quality control in early childhood education in Nigeria. The study adopted the correlational research design. A total of 1000 head and assistant head teachers participated in the study. The study employed accidental sampling technique. Questionnaire was used to collect data for the study. Linear regression analysis was used in analysis. The findings showed that there were significant relationships between compliance as minimum requirement for teacher recruitment, compliance to experience as requirement for teacher recruitment into managerial positions, and quality control in early childhood education in Nigeria. The study succeeded to analyse policy compliance in teacher recruitment to quality control in early childhood education. However, the use of an accidental sampling technique has the tendency of sampling bias, as the selection of respondents may not be representative of the broader population.

The study in Ghana by Ackah-Jnr et al. (2022) analyses Ghana's Early Childhood Education (ECE) policy implementation using McDonnell and Elmore's framework of five elemental instruments. The study supported the analysis with ECE policy documents and research in ECE. Enabling and inhibiting policy instrument factors affecting ECE were identified and ways were devised to enhance the latter. The study found that while ECE policy and practice has somewhat addressed equity and access issues, concerns exist regarding implementation factors such as quality teacher training and parent involvement for promoting effective programmes.

In Rwanda, Baptiste et al. (2022) determined the effect of early childhood education policy on pupils' readiness in public primary schools (primary one) in Gasabo district in Rwanda. Correlation research design was employed. The findings revealed that early childhood education policy influence pupils' readiness at 64.9 percent of R- square. It was noted that teaching and learning resources, teachers' qualification, numeracy development and language development can improve pupils' readiness for learning. Research in Zambia by Mwelwa et al. (2023) established the effects of the Free Education Policy on learner enrolment, school infrastructure, financing and the quality of teaching and learning in community primary and secondary public schools in Zambia. Quantitative data was collected from teachers through a structured questionnaire. The study found that the implementation of the Free Education Policy had increased school enrolments and government funding. From the findings, Zambia's Free Education Policy implementation can be strengthened by prioritizing desks, textbooks, sanitary facilities, teacher deployment, modern classroom construction, especially in rural areas, and enacting sustainable financing legislation.

In Tanzania, Rodriguez-Segura and Mbiti (2022) conducted a study entitled, "Back to the basics: curriculum reform, compliance and student learning in Tanzania". Using student-level panel data, the study evaluated the effects of these reforms on learning outcomes. The study found that policy increased learning by around 0.20 standard deviations in Kiswahili and Math test scores one year after the start of the reform. Timely teacher training on the new curriculum was associated with even larger effects. Evaluating longer term outcomes, showed suggestive evidence that the reform decreased the dropout rate of children up to four years later. Although, the study used-student panel data to provide the curriculum reforms and learning outcomes, the study does not explore the effects of policy compliance on teacher workload, instructional quality, or pupils' engagement. This current study assessed the extent to which policy compliance influence the implementation of pre-primary education to establish a fully understanding of the research questions.

### 2.2.2 Strategies to Improve Education Policy Compliance in Pre-Primary Education

In Russia, Seliverstova (2021) investigated compliance with early childhood education: The interrelation of income level and parental investment. Data for the study were drawn from an online survey, conducted among 260 parents of children aged 3–7 years old. The results showed that there is a gap in policy compliance. Also, there is a gap in spending on education in poor, low- and middle-income families. Similarly, it was noted that parents from poor and low-income families value extra classes for pre-schoolers. In Rwanda, Nakure and Mulegi (2023) assessed educational planning and accessibility to comply with early childhood education in Gasabo District. Stratified, purposeful and fundamental randomness sample approaches were used to sample 15 principals, 2 sector education officers, 47 teachers, and 46 parents (for a total of 110 respondents). Formal and semi-structured questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussions were employed. The study shows the importance of education planning in improving ECE accessibility. Despite that, it does not detail specific mechanisms for ensuring compliance with education policies at pre-primary education level.

The study in Tanzania by Lazaro and Matiku (2022) focused on the challenges faced in complying with Fee-Free Education (FFE) policy for secondary schools in Tanzania. The data were collected by using interviews, questionnaires, and documentary reviews. The study indicated that stakeholders were involved in the implementation of FFE in many ways including educating parents, students, and the community concerning the innovation, encouraging parents to send their children to school, making sure that fee is not paid in schools, and improving the academic performance of students. Stakeholders were satisfied with the introduction of FFE because it has provided relief in terms of education costs to parents and guardians. Another study in Tanzania by Ephraim et al. (2024) assessed the head teachers' compliance with pedagogical leadership strategies in supporting children's transition from pre-primary to primary school in Mpwapwa and Chemba District. A case study design and semi-structured interviews were

administered to 9 head teachers and 9 pre-primary school teachers. The collected data were subjected to content analysis. The study's findings revealed that the provision of teaching and learning resources, stakeholder or community engagement, teachers' motivation, a supportive school culture, teacher training and learning follow-up are essential pedagogical leadership strategies employed by head teachers to support children's transition from pre-primary to primary school. However, it focuses more on compliance with leadership practices rather than on the broader issue of policy compliance. The current study sought to identify the practical strategies on policy compliance for better implementation of ECE.

# 3. Methodology

This study employed a concurrent mixed research design. Concurrent mixed research design is a mixed-methods research approach where data is collected simultaneously or in parallel within the same study (Aultman, 2020). According to Creswell & Creswell (2018) in this single-phase approach, a researcher collects both quantitative and qualitative data, analyses them separately, and then compares the results to see if the findings confirm or disconfirm to each other. The quantitative and qualitative results were later integrated in order to enhance the validity and reliability of the findings.

The target population for this study included 101 head teachers, 109 pre-primary teachers, 118 standard one teachers, 115 standard two teachers, and 1 District Education Officer (DEO), a total of 444 individuals (MoEST, 2024).Head teachers were involved since they are key school administrators responsible for overseeing policy compliance in their schools, resource management and supervising of teaching and learning. Pre-primary teachers are at the core of curriculum implementation and offered important insights into challenges and experiences related to the policy compliance when implementing pre-primary education. Teachers of standard one and two were also useful in this study because they are aware of how the early childhood education helps the children to prepare for and settle into primary school. The DEO is responsible for overseeing the implementation of policies; monitoring of schools for performance and compliance with national educational standards; their perspective is thus crucial in understanding policy compliance level, its effectiveness and challenges in the implementation of pre-primary education. Hence, these respondents offered integrated views of policy compliance and implementation of pre-primary education.

This study used 10% to 30% of each target group. The justification for this sample size is because 10% to 30% of the target population is optimal sample size that can provide basic statistical information (Uakarn, et al., 2021). Therefore, this study sampled 10 head teachers (10% of 101), 20 teachers pre-primary teachers (18.5% of 109), 17% of 118 standard one teachers that is, 20 teachers and 17.5% of 115 standard two teachers that is 20teachers, while 1 DEO was included as a sample directly. Thereafter, simple random sampling was used to select 10 public primary schools, to avoid biasness while stratified and random sampling was employed to select teachers to avoid discrimination of the respondents. Criterion purposive sampling technique was used to select 10 head teachers and 1 DEO.

This study administered questionnaire to primary school teachers to collect quantitative data. The questionnaire was constructed in the form of 5-Likert Scale responses. In addition, interview guide was administered to head teachers and DEO. The interview was of structured form with a predetermined set of questions that followed the specific objectives. Content validity of the instruments was ensured by research experts. The inputs from experts were used to improve the research tools, refine and ascertain its relevance, coverage and consistency before its application in real field situations. Cronbach alpha method was used to determine the reliability of the questionnaires after a pilot study in 10% of the sample size and the correlation coefficient value of 0.756for teachers' questionnaires was generated. According to Cohen, et al.(2017), the instruments were found to be fairly reliable for the study.

Questionnaires were then issued to the respondents and collected after one day while personal interview was conducted the same day of visit. The researcher audio recorded the conversation for later transcription with the consent of the interviewees. For qualitative instruments, trustworthiness of the instruments was achieved by ensuring the same procedures, interview protocols, and data collection methods were applied uniformly to all participants thereby reducing bias and variation. During data collection, the researcher ensured confidentiality by not exposing their names and using the data collected for the research purposes only. To avoid plagiarism and fraud, the researcher duly acknowledged all the authors of the works that have been cited in this study.

# 4. Results and Discussion

This section includes presentation of the results and the discussion of the findings on the influence of policy compliance on the implementation of pre-primary education in public primary schools in Arusha district council..

### 4.1 Findings on the Effects of Policy Compliance on the Effectiveness of Pre-Primary Education in Public Primary Schools in Arusha District Council

The first objective of this study was to assess the effects of policy compliance on the effectiveness of pre-primary education in public primary schools in Arusha District Council. The questionnaires were provided to 60 primary school teachers in public primary schools. The respondents were required to indicate their level of agreement with the variables in the questionnaire. Table 1 shows the summary of the respondents on the effects of policy compliance on the effectiveness of pre-primary education in public primary schools.

On a 5-point Likert scale, a high mean (closer to 5) indicates respondents perceive policy compliance to have a very high or high effect, while a low mean (closer to 1) shows a very low or low effect. A moderate mean (around 3) reflects an average or neutral effect. The standard deviation (Std. Dev.) indicates the level of consensus, with lower values showing agreement and higher values showing diverse opinions.

**Table 1: Effect of Policy Compliance on the Effectiveness of Pre-Primary Education (n=60)**

| Variable | Very High Effectf(%) | High Effect f(%) | Moderate Effectf(%) | Low Effect f(%) | Very Low Effectf(%) | Mean | Std. Dev. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Improved learning outcomes | 15(25) | 25(41.7) | 9(15) | 11(18.3) | 0(0) | 3.73 | 1.04 |
| Preparing children for standard 1-7 | 10(16.7) | 36(60) | 8(13.3) | 6(10) | 0(0) | 3.83 | 0.83 |
| Enhanced school readiness | 14(23.3) | 31(51.7) | 8(13.3) | 6(10) | 1(1.7) | 3.85 | 0.95 |
| Teacher performance | 20(33.3) | 28(46.7) | 5(8.3) | 7(11.7) | 0(0) | 4.02 | 0.95 |
| Improved inclusive education | 20(33.3) | 23(38.3) | 9(15) | 8(13.3) | 0(0) | 3.92 | 1.01 |
| Improved teacher parent collaboration | 16(26.7) | 28(46.7) | 7(11.7) | 9(15) | 0(0) | 3.85 | 0.99 |
| Consistency in learning standards | 17(28.3) | 31(51.7) | 8(13.3) | 4(6.7) | 0(0) | 4.02 | 0.83 |
| Understands child strengths and weakness in learning | 18(30) | 28(46.7) | 7(11.7) | 6(10) | 1(1.7) | 3.93 | 0.99 |
| Identifying child memory ability | 18(30) | 31(51.7) | 9(15) | 2(3.3) | 0(0) | 4.08 | 0.77 |
| Reinforces child behaviour | 16(26.7) | 24(40) | 7(11.7) | 10(16.7) | 3(5) | 3.67 | 1.19 |
| Identifying child educational needs | 13(21.7) | 39(65) | 5(8.3) | 3(5) | 0(0) | 4.03 | 0.71 |
| Capturing various learning skills | 19(31.7) | 28(46.7) | 7(11.7) | 6(10) | 0(0) | 4.00 | 0.92 |

The data reveals that 25% of respondents reported a very high effect of policy compliance on improved learning outcomes, indicating that strict adherence to educational policies enables structured delivery of foundational knowledge in literacy and numeracy, thereby enhancing children's ability to progress academically. The high effect rating by 41.7% further demonstrates that policy frameworks play a crucial role in reinforcing curriculum delivery, teacher preparedness, and performance standards. On the other hand, 15% rated the effect as moderate, suggesting that while policies are beneficial, their implementation may be inconsistent or constrained by practical limitations such as resource inadequacies. The low effect perception by 18.3% raises concerns about possible gaps between policy formulation and school-level execution, where issues such as limited teacher training or lack of materials may weaken the policy's intended impact on student achievement. The relatively high mean score of 3.73 and low standard deviation of 1.04 indicates respondents perceive policy compliance.

Also, the issue of improved learning outcomes was raised during interviews with the head teachers and the DEO.One among the head teachers noted that:

> *"When we follow the policy, teachers know what to teach and how to teach, and that helps children understand better"*(Personal Interview 29thApril, 2025).

The DEO reinforced by saying:

> *"Policy implementation brings uniformity in teaching, which contributes to better performance, especially in reading and counting. This is beneficial for a structured lesson delivery and improved educational outcomes"*(Personal Interview 30thApril 2025).

The interview findings show that, adherence to pre-primary education policies ensures that teaching is structured, standardized, and aligned with learning objectives, leading to more effective comprehension and skill acquisition among children. The respondents reported that compliance with pre-primary education policy improves learning outcomes among children. Therefore, schools that comply with pre-primary education policies are likely to observe enhanced learning outcomes, as learners receive consistent instruction that strengthens foundational skills in literacy and numeracy.The findings on the improved learning outcomes align with Rodriguez-Segura and Mbiti (2022) in Tanzania, who found that curriculum reforms and strict adherence to them increased student learning outcomes in Kiswahili and Math by 0.20 standard deviations. However, on the other side the study by Liljestrand (2020) shows the complexity and fragmentation of enacted policies created confusion and uneven implementation of the policy. Therefore, when teachers comply with educational policies, there is improved learning outcome in implementing pre-primary education.

A total of 16.7% of respondents observed a very high effect of policy compliance in preparing children for standard 1-7, underscoring the importance of policy-directed early childhood instruction in laying a strong foundation for primary education. The high effect rating by 60% further affirms that policy compliance ensures age-appropriate cognitive and social readiness, facilitating smoother transitions into formal schooling. However, 13.3% registered a moderate effect, implying that although policies exist, their influence may be undermined by variable implementation fidelity or teacher capacity. The low effect reported by 10% points to significant shortcomings in the alignment between policy provisions and classroom realities, which may hinder the holistic preparation of children for upper primary grades.

When interviewed the head teachers reported that, policy implementation ensures children are well prepared for the primary education curriculum. One head teacher explained:

> *"Our learners who come from pre-primary classes where the curriculum is followed properly perform better when they join standard one."*(Personal Interview 02ndMay 2025).

Similarly, the other head teacher stressed:

> *"Policies help us to make sure the pupils are not just playing, but also learning what will help them in primary school."* (Personal Interview 2ndMay 2025).

These qualitative findings on preparing children for standard 1-7, imply that, compliance with pre-primary policies equips children with both academic knowledge and behavioral skills needed to succeed in the primary education curriculum. Therefore, effective policy adherence ensures smooth academic progression from pre-primary to primary education, reducing learning gaps and improving overall performance. The findings on preparing children for formal schooling are in agreement with the findings of Baptiste et al. (2022) in Rwanda, who found that ECE policy significantly impacted school readiness in primary one student through improvements in teaching quality and learning resources. However, Ackah-Jnr et al. (2022) indicated that gaps in teacher training and parental involvement weakened the full realisation of ECE policies despite their strong design. Hence, even where policies exist, implementation and adherence remain a crucial determinant of success.

With 23.3% rating a very high effect, the findings suggest that policy compliance plays a transformative role in equipping children with the emotional, social, and academic readiness required for structured learning environments. A majority of 51.7% supported this with a high effect response, showing that adherence to policy-guided practices, such as age-appropriate assessments and play-based methodologies, significantly supports school readiness. Besides, 13.3% expressed a moderate effect, indicating uneven application of readiness frameworks across schools. The low effect perceived by 10% and the very low effect from 1.7% of respondents suggest that in some contexts, policy may not be translated into practice effectively, thus leaving children underprepared for the rigors of formal education.

Also, the head teachers and the DEO during interview agreed that, compliance with pre-primary policies enhances learners' readiness for school in terms of confidence and basic skills. Among the head teachers one of them commented:

> *"A child from a structured pre-primary programme knows how to sit, listen, and interact with others. That is because of following the policy."*(Personal Interview 05thMay 2025)

On the other hand, the DEO reported:

> *"If the curriculum and timetable are followed, learners become more ready to start primary education without fear."* Personal Interview 06th May 2025).

The information shows that following pre-primary education policies promotes emotional, social, and cognitive preparedness among children, helping them transition smoothly into formal schooling. This shows that, policy adherence facilitates learners' confidence, discipline, and social interaction skills, which are critical for academic success and integration into the primary school environment.

In addition, during interview, it was revealed when one among the head teachers stated:

> *"Policy helps us teach discipline, like greeting elders, washing hands, and sitting quietly. We start these habits early"*(Personal Interview 14thMay 2025).

The other head teacher added:

> *"When we enforce routine according to the policy, children become more responsible and respectful."* (Personal Interview 15thMay 2025).

The head teachers agreed that following policy helps to instill discipline and positive behavior among young learners. The interview findings strongly supported the quantitative findings that, behavioral guidelines in the policy promote moral and social development from an early age. Hence, compliance with policy strengthens learners' discipline, responsibility, and respect for rules. These findings on modifying child's behaviour are related with Ackah-Jnr et al. (2022), who observed that the successful implementation of early childhood policies particularly those related to child development and conduct relies heavily on teacher training and stakeholder involvement.

Also, during interview, the head teachers and the DEO indicated that policy compliance supports early identification of learners with special educational needs. This was shown when one among the head teachers noted: *"*

> *The policy says we must observe and record any learning difficulties. This helps us plan for extra support or referrals"*(Personal Interview 16thMay 2025).

Still, the DEO argued:

> *"Sometimes it is hard without enough teachers or materials, but our teachers try to identify those who are slow learners or different"* (Personal Interview 19thMay 2025).

The qualitative insights from the head teachers and the DEO supported that, policy provides structured guidelines for early detection of learning difficulties, though practical challenges limit full compliance. Therefore, policy adherence enables early intervention and support for learners with special needs, improving inclusivity.These findings on identifying child's needs support the evidence by Rodriguez-Segura and Mbiti (2022) that educational policies when complied with can directly impact learning outcomes and reduce dropout rates, especially when timely teacher training accompanies the policies. The findings also support Compliance Theory, as proposed by Etzioni (Dodge, 2016), which suggests that educational actors' adherence to rules, regulations, and standards fosters order, accountability, and improved educational delivery. Teachers' and administrators' commitment to policy guidelines such as curriculum adherence, early

assessments, and parent engagement demonstrates that compliance encourages responsible behaviour and facilitates desired educational outcomes (Fiene, 2022).

## 4.2 Findings on the Possible Strategies for Improving Education Policy Compliance on Implementing Pre-Primary Education in Public Schools in Arusha District Council

The last objective of this study was to suggest the possible strategies for improving education policy compliance on implementing pre-primary education in public schools. The questionnaires were provided to 60 primary school teachers in public primary schools. The respondents were required to indicate their level of agreement with the variables in the questionnaire. Table 2 shows the results on the possible strategies for improving education policy compliance on implementing pre-primary education in public schools.

On a 5-point Likert scale, a high mean (closer to 5) indicates strong agreement that a strategy is effective, while a low mean (closer to 1) shows disagreement. A moderate mean (around 3) reflects neutral or mixed perceptions. The standard deviation (Std. Dev.) shows how much responses vary, with lower values indicating agreement and higher values indicating some sort of disagreement.

***Table 2: Data on the possible strategies for improving education policy compliance on implementing pre-primary education (n=60)***

| **Variable** | Strongly Agree f(%) | Agree f(%) | Neutral f(%) | Disagree f(%) | Strongly Disagree f(%) | Mean | Std. Dev. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Improve policy coordination | 25(41.7) | 33(55) | 2(3.3) | 0(0) | 0(0) | 4.38 | 0.56 |
| Provide regular policy training | 29(48.3) | 31(51.7) | 0(0) | 0(0) | 0(0) | 4.48 | 0.50 |
| Recruit and train more pre-primary teachers | 30(50) | 29(48.3) | 1(1.7) | 0(0) | 0(0) | 4.48 | 0.54 |
| Increase capitation grants | 27(45) | 19(31.7) | 9(15) | 5(8.3) | 0(0) | 4.13 | 0.96 |
| Develop standardized assessment tools | 20(33.3) | 32(53.3) | 8(13.3) | 0(0) | 0(0) | 4.20 | 0.66 |
| Use multiple practices in teaching and learning | 29(48.3) | 25(41.7) | 4(6.7) | 2(3.3) | 0(0) | 4.35 | 0.76 |
| Execute the policy with real world examples | 32(53.3) | 27(45) | 1(1.7) | 0(0) | 0(0) | 4.52 | 0.54 |
| Enhance teacher training on pre-primary education | 32(53.3) | 24(40) | 4(6.7) | 0(0) | 0(0) | 4.47 | 0.62 |
| Use technology for interactive learning and assessment | 19(31.7) | 34(56.7) | 6(10) | 1(1.7) | 0(0) | 4.18 | 0.68 |
| Increase teacher motivation | 27(45) | 32(53.3) | 1(1.7) | 0(0) | 0(0) | 4.43 | 0.53 |
| Improve educational facilities | 19(31.7) | 35(58.3) | 6(10) | 0(0) | 0(0) | 4.22 | 0.61 |
| Read policy guidelines several times | 28(46.7) | 30(50) | 2(3.3) | 0(0) | 0(0) | 4.43 | 0.56 |

The majority of respondents agreed (55%) or strongly agreed (41.7%) that improving policy coordination is crucial for enhancing policy compliance in the implementation of pre-primary education. Only a small portion (3.3%) remained neutral, and no respondents disagreed. With a high mean of 4.38 and a low standard deviation of 0.56, the responses indicate a strong consensus. This suggests that stakeholders perceive coordination across education departments and government levels as essential for consistent policy application. Effective coordination ensures roles and responsibilities are clear, reducing policy fragmentation and improving implementation at the school level. Additionally, well-coordinated efforts help prevent duplication of activities, ensure timely resource distribution, and streamline monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

When interviewed, one head teacher expressed:

> *"Many times, we get different instructions from different authorities it becomes confusing. This requires improving policy coordination among policy designers and policy implementers"* (Personal Interview 2nd May 2025).

This was also confirmed by the DEO:

> *"Effective coordination across departments ensures resources, training, and follow-ups align with policy objectives."*(Personal Interview 2nd May 2025).

The interview perspectives revealed a communication gap between different levels of educational administration and suggested communication coordination between educational stakeholders. These interview findings from both head teachers and the DEO prove the need for clear communication between national, regional, and district education levels ensuring that, schools are better equipped to comply with policy directives, avoiding inefficiencies in policy compliance. The findings on the policy coordination strategy are supported by Nakure and Mulegi (2023) who demonstrated that insufficient planning in areas like curriculum development and facilities hinder policy compliance in early childhood education. When education departments and levels of government are well-coordinated, roles become clearer, and resources are allocated efficiently. Therefore, strengthening coordination mechanisms through meetings, seminars, and shared accountability, significantly enhance compliance in implementing pre-primary education.

Nearly all respondents either strongly agreed (48.3%) or agreed (51.7%) on the importance of regular training on education policy, with no neutral or negative responses. The mean score of 4.48 and a very low standard deviation (0.50) emphasize a unanimous perception that training enhances understanding and execution of policies. This implies that when educators are regularly trained, they are better equipped to interpret and implement policies accurately, reducing errors and resistance due to misinterpretation or lack of awareness. Furthermore, training helps update educators on new policy developments, reinforces key implementation areas, and builds a sense of ownership and responsibility towards policy outcomes.

Also, during interviews with the head teachers and the DEO, one among the head teachers stressed:

> *"Some of teachers don't fully understand the policy; training helps us implement it properly. Consequently, continuous training is an essential strategy for effective implementation and policy compliance."*(Personal Interview 6th May 2025).

On the other hand, the DEO revealed:

> *"When teachers are trained regularly, they stay updated and committed to applying the policy correctly"*(Personal Interview 09th May 2025).

Therefore, continuous professional development empowers teachers to interpret and apply policy guidelines accurately. This implies that, professional development opportunities should be institutionalized to empower teachers with updated knowledge and skills on policy.This policy training strategy reflects what Baptiste et al. (2022) found that, teacher qualifications and professional readiness directly influenced children's learning outcomes in pre-primary education. Regular training updates teachers on policy changes, builds interpretation skills, and enhances professional confidence. This implies that, training should be for professional development activity, ensuring that educators remain informed and capable of implementing education policy with consistency and accuracy.

The data shows that, the respondents strongly agreed (50%) and agreed (48.3%) that recruiting and training more pre-primary teachers is a key strategy, with only one respondent (1.7%) remaining neutral. With a high mean score of 4.48 and low variation (0.54), this finding points to a strong consensus that teacher shortage undermines the success of pre-primary education. Investing in teacher recruitment and training ensures sufficient human

resources to deliver quality education and effectively comply with curriculum and policy expectations. Well-trained teachers are more confident, capable, and committed, leading to improved learner outcomes and consistent policy adherence in diverse classroom settings.
Regarding recruiting and employing more pre-primary teachers, the head teacher when interviewed pointed out that:

> *"One teacher for over 70 children is unrealistic, therefore there is need for employment and deployment of more pre-primary teachers to match pupil-teacher ratio."* (Personal Interview 13 May 2025).

While the DEO shared that:

> *"Pre-primary education needs dedicated staff, yet we are still understaffed. We are trying our level best to employ more teachers."*(Personal Interview 15 May 2025).

Both respondents (the head teachers and the DEO) highlight the critical need for adequate pre-primary teachers for pre-primary education. Therefore, there is a need to increase both the number and the competency of teachers to ensure adequate coverage and adherence to curriculum requirements.This indicates that, recruitment and targeted training of pre-primary teachers are necessary to improve the teacher-pupil ratio and ensure effective curriculum delivery.These findings on teacher deployment are supported by Ackah-Jnr et al. (2022) who emphasized the need to evaluate ECE and provide planned and ongoing opportunities to advance the professional development, capacity, and motivation of ECE implementers, especially early childhood teachers. Also, Ali et al. (2022) stressed that timely teacher training on the new curriculum was associated with even larger effects in policy compliance. Therefore, investing in recruitment and in-service training ensures that teachers are both sufficient in number and well-equipped to implement the curriculum effectively for sustainable policy compliance.
Additionally, during interview the head teachers and the DEO, one among the school leaders commented:

> *"I read the policy often and remind my staff to do the same to make sure I'm not and they are not missing anything."*(Personal Interview 05 June 2025).

The DEO emphasized:

> *"Understanding deepens with regular review, especially when policy content is dense."*(Personal Interview 05 June 2025).

The excerpts demonstrate that repeated engagement with policy documents fosters deeper understanding. Therefore, emphasizing a culture of policy literacy among teachers ensures continuous engagement and better policy compliance. This indicates that, primary schools and local government authorities should promote a culture of policy literacy and continuous review to ensure compliance.

These findings on regularly review of the policy are supported by URT (2022) that reported the implementation of the 2014 Education and Training Policy, education stakeholders' various opinions and concerns regarding the adequacy and relevance of the policy's content. Further, it reported the curricula at different levels of education and training. This shows that, policy implementers are repeatedly reading the policy content thus they came up with different arguments. Therefore, school administrators should create routines that promote regular review of policies, perhaps through policy-focused meetings or bulletin updates, to strengthen institutional memory and consistent policy compliance.

# 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

## 5.1 Conclusion

From the findings this study concludes that effective compliance with national education policies significantly enhances the effectiveness in the implementation of pre-primary education, particularly in enhancing child development, improving teacher practices, and aligning learning outcomes with national standards. This shows the critical value of policy implementation as an aspect of quality pre-primary education.

Lastly, this study concludes that, a combination of systemic, pedagogical, and administrative strategies is essential to improving policy compliance. Effective interventions must target teacher capacity, resource allocation, policy understanding, and the integration of technology to promote sustainable and inclusive pre-primary education practices.

## 5.2 Recommendations

Based on the conclusion of the study, the researcher recommended the following:

1. The MoEST should strengthen policy coordination by ensuring that all directives related to pre-primary education are clearly communicated and regularly reviewed with implementers at the local level. Also, there is a need to increase the allocation of capitation grants specifically for pre-primary education to address critical shortages in teaching and learning materials, classroom infrastructure, and assessment tools.
2. The Tanzania Institute of Education (TIE) should review and improve the pre-primary curriculum to ensure it is inclusive, developmentally appropriate, and aligned with the evolving educational demands. Also, providing user-friendly policy manuals and simplified guides that can be easily understood and applied by teachers and school leaders.
3. The local government authorities should recruit and deploy more qualified pre-primary teachers to address the staffing gap and ensure each pre-primary classroom has at least one professionally trained teacher. Also, it is crucial to conduct regular in-service training and workshops for pre-primary teachers on pedagogy, assessment, policy interpretation, and inclusive education practices.
4. Likewise, there is a need to strengthen the supervision and monitoring systems to ensure that schools comply with national policy expectations and to provide feedback for continuous improvement.
5. Public primary schools should facilitate the reading and interpretation of education policies among staff and encourage frequent policy review sessions during school meetings.
6. School administrators can encourage the use of multiple teaching and assessment practices to accommodate diverse learning needs and promote holistic child development. Also, the schools can foster collaboration with parents through meetings and communication channels to improve support for children's early learning.
7. Parents and community should actively participate in school activities and provide support to ensure children's attendance, learning, and overall school readiness. Engage with teachers to understand their children's progress and collaborate in addressing early learning challenges at home. This would help in encouraging teachers to comply with policy while implementing pre-primary education.

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