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**EFFECT OF GENDER DIVERSITY PRACTICES ON THE PERFORMANCE OF  
ECDE TEACHERS IN MARSABIT COUNTY, KENYA**

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## Effect of Gender Diversity Practices On the Performance of Ecde Teachers in Marsabit County, Kenya

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### Abstract:

**Purpose of Study:** This study examined the effect of gender diversity practices on the performance of ECDE teachers in Marsabit County, Kenya. It addressed gaps in evidence from rural and multi-ethnic contexts where patriarchal norms and resource constraints influence implementation of gender-inclusive policies and teacher performance outcomes in the education sector within Kenyan education sector context.

**Methodology:** A descriptive mixed-methods design was used targeting 335 respondents, from whom 182 were sampled using Yamane's formula and stratified random sampling. Data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, and focus group discussions. Analysis was conducted using SPSS for descriptive and

inferential statistics, complemented by thematic analysis of qualitative data in Kenya.

**Findings:** A response rate of 95.1% was achieved. Gender diversity practices recorded a high cumulative mean score of 4.22 (SD = 0.69), indicating strong positive perceptions regarding communication of policies, equitable professional development, fair workload distribution, and collaboration among ECDE teachers. Regression analysis revealed that gender diversity practices significantly and positively predict ECDE teacher performance ( $\beta = 0.648$ ,  $R^2 = 0.424$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). These results suggest that improved gender-inclusive practices enhance teacher motivation, cooperation, and productivity in ECDE institutions within Marsabit County, reflecting the importance of inclusive policy implementation in improving educational workforce outcomes in rural contexts of Kenya setting.

**Conclusion:** The study concluded that gender diversity practices significantly enhance ECDE teacher performance in Marsabit County, Kenya. Effective policy communication, equitable access to training, fair workload distribution, and inclusive leadership were found to strengthen motivation, collaboration, and productivity. Strengthening gender-responsive policies and leadership development is essential for improved educational outcomes in rural contexts.

**Keywords:** *Gender Diversity Practices, ECDE Teacher Performance, Marsabit County, Inclusive Education, Diversity Management*

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **Background of the Study**

Early Childhood Development and Education (ECDE) forms the foundation of lifelong learning, cognitive development, and social integration. The quality of ECDE instruction is significantly shaped by the competence, motivation, and well-being of teachers who deliver it. Globally, it is recognized that a diverse and inclusive teaching workforce enhances educational outcomes by bringing varied perspectives, culturally responsive pedagogies, and balanced role modeling to young learners (UNESCO, 2022). Gender diversity in the teaching profession refers to the equitable representation, treatment, and engagement of both male and female teachers across recruitment, training, workload allocation, and professional advancement opportunities (Mugambi, 2024).

Globally, gender inequality in the education workforce remains a persistent challenge. While women constitute the majority of ECDE teachers in most countries, this numerical dominance has not always translated into equitable treatment or professional recognition. Studies across Sub-Saharan Africa indicate that female teachers frequently encounter structural barriers, including unequal access to professional development, limited representation in leadership positions, and disproportionate non-teaching duties that constrain their professional performance (Adebayo et al., 2023). In contrast, male ECDE teachers, who are often a minority, sometimes face social stigma associated with working with young children, which discourages their entry and retention in the profession (Ochieng, 2023).

In Kenya, the education sector has made notable strides toward gender equality through policy frameworks such as the National Gender and Equality Commission Act (2011) and the Basic Education Act (2013), both of which promote equitable access to education and fair treatment of employees in public institutions. The Teachers Service Commission (TSC) has adopted gender mainstreaming frameworks aimed at ensuring balanced teacher representation and equitable access to professional development. However, in marginalized and arid counties such as Marsabit, implementation of these policies is frequently constrained by deep-rooted cultural norms, geographical remoteness, and inadequate institutional support (Karanja, 2022).

Marsabit County is a semi-arid, ethnically diverse region in northern Kenya, inhabited predominantly by nomadic and semi-nomadic communities including the Borana, Gabbra, Rendille, and Samburu. The county faces significant challenges in education delivery, including high teacher attrition, low gender parity in teacher hiring, and limited professional development opportunities for ECDE practitioners. Traditional gender norms in many of these communities often restrict women's professional mobility and limit their participation in leadership or advanced training programs (Wanjiru, 2022). Patriarchal structures may simultaneously marginalize the voices and contributions of female teachers, thereby reducing organizational cohesion and instructional quality in ECDE centers.

Research across Africa has demonstrated that gender-inclusive practices, when effectively implemented, improve teacher motivation, engagement, collaboration, and overall classroom performance (Smith & Adams, 2023; Mugambi, 2024). However, most of these studies are concentrated in urban or semi-urban settings, leaving a critical gap in understanding how

gender diversity practices function in rural, culturally conservative, and resource-limited environments such as Marsabit County. This study therefore seeks to examine the effect of gender diversity practices on the performance of ECDE teachers in Marsabit County, Kenya, providing context-specific evidence to inform policy and practice.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Performance of ECDE teachers remains a major concern in many parts of Kenya, especially in marginalized counties such as Marsabit County. Effective performance among ECDE teachers is essential for quality curriculum delivery, learner development, classroom management, and achievement of educational objectives. However, reports from the Ministry of Education and studies by Kenyan scholars indicate that ECDE teachers continue to experience challenges related to low morale, inadequate professional support, inconsistent attendance, reduced motivation, and poor instructional effectiveness, which negatively influence the quality of early childhood education (Orodho, 2020; Wanjiru & Ngugi, 2021). In Marsabit County, these challenges are worsened by harsh working conditions, cultural barriers, limited staffing, and unequal workplace opportunities, leading to concerns about teacher commitment and overall job performance.

At the same time, educational institutions have increasingly adopted gender diversity practices aimed at promoting equality, inclusion, and fair treatment of employees. Such practices include equitable recruitment, equal promotion opportunities, gender-balanced leadership, and non-discriminatory work environments. Kenyan researchers such as Chege and Kiptum (2022) note that effective gender diversity practices can improve employee motivation, teamwork, and productivity. However, despite the growing emphasis on gender inclusion in Kenya's public institutions, gender disparities and unequal treatment continue to exist in some ECDE centres, particularly in marginalized counties. Most existing studies in Kenya have focused on workforce diversity in general public institutions, with limited attention given to how gender diversity practices specifically influence the performance of ECDE teachers in Marsabit County. This study therefore seeks to fill this gap by examining the effect of gender diversity practices on the performance of ECDE teachers in Marsabit County, Kenya.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to determine the effect of gender diversity practices on the performance of ECDE teachers in Marsabit County, Kenya.

### **Research Hypothesis**

H<sub>01</sub>: Gender diversity practices do not significantly influence the performance of ECDE teachers in Marsabit County, Kenya.

## **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Theoretical Review**

#### **Diversity Management Theory**

Diversity Management Theory, originally advanced by Thomas and Ely (1996), asserts that the purposeful management of workforce diversity can yield significant improvements in organizational performance. The theory posits that organizations must move beyond mere tolerance of differences to actively integrating diverse human resources into organizational processes in ways that enhance innovation, problem-solving, and productivity. It further emphasizes that organizations should establish inclusive practices, equitable policies, and supportive working environments in order to harness the full value of a diverse workforce (Cox, 2001).

In the context of ECDE in Marsabit County, Diversity Management Theory provides a relevant framework for understanding how gender-specific practices influence teacher performance. The theory suggests that when gender balance is promoted through equitable recruitment, equal access to professional development, and fair workload distribution, a collaborative and high-performing teaching environment is likely to emerge. Conversely, where gender biases persist and diversity management practices are poorly implemented, performance outcomes are constrained by exclusion, professional dissatisfaction, and inequity (Shore et al., 2018).

Empirical support for the theory is provided by Turi et al. (2022), whose study demonstrated that age and gender diversity, combined with strong leadership, significantly contribute to organizational effectiveness. The study found that leadership competence acts as a vital mediator in the relationship between diversity management and performance, underscoring the need for skilled and inclusive leadership in managing diverse teaching teams. This theoretical framework guided the present study in examining how gender diversity practices, when effectively communicated and implemented, translate into improved performance outcomes for ECDE teachers in Marsabit County.

## **Empirical Review**

### **Gender Diversity Practices and Performance of ECDE Teachers**

Smith and Adams (2023) conducted a study in Nairobi's urban schools investigating the impact of gender-inclusive practices on teacher effectiveness. Their findings demonstrated that gender-balanced teams and equitable career advancement opportunities enhance employee motivation and instructional productivity. The study adopted a mixed-methods approach, combining structured questionnaires with in-depth interviews. Schools with transparent gender policies recorded higher teacher satisfaction scores and improved instructional quality. However, the study was limited to urban contexts, creating a contextual gap with respect to rural and culturally diverse settings such as Marsabit County. The present study addresses this gap by focusing specifically on gender diversity practices in a rural, multi-ethnic ECDE environment.

Karanja (2022) examined gender mainstreaming techniques and their impact on job satisfaction and teacher retention in Kenyan county education departments. Guided by Equity Theory, the study emphasized that fairness and equity in organizational practices directly influence employee happiness and staff retention. Using a descriptive survey design with quantitative data from administrative staff, the study found that inclusive gender policies enhanced job satisfaction and reduced turnover rates among female employees. However, a contextual gap

persists in that the study focused on administrative personnel rather than frontline ECDE teachers in rural regions. The study also did not examine classroom-level pedagogical outcomes influenced by gender inclusion, presenting a conceptual gap that the present study seeks to fill.

Mugambi (2024) examined the implementation of gender-sensitive training programs for public school teachers in Kenya, evaluating their effect on teacher performance. The study was guided by Human Capital Theory, which posits that investment in skills and training enhances employee productivity. Using a descriptive survey and program evaluation methodology, the study found that gender-sensitive training improved interpersonal skills and promoted equal participation in decision-making. However, the study did not examine rural ECDE environments, where cultural norms and resource constraints may significantly moderate outcomes. The current study therefore bridges this gap by investigating these dynamics specifically within Marsabit County's ECDE sector.

Ochieng (2023) researched gender-inclusive policies in primary schools in Bungoma County, Kenya, analyzing the effect of teacher cooperation in mixed-gender teams on student learning outcomes. Grounded in Transformational Leadership Theory, the study found that schools with leaders who advocated for gender parity and collaborative approaches exhibited higher teacher engagement and improved classroom performance. The study used a mixed-methods approach combining teacher surveys and focus group discussions. Despite these valuable insights, the study concentrated on semi-urban schools and overlooked rural, multi-ethnic environments such as Marsabit County. Furthermore, the influence of traditional gender norms on policy implementation and teacher-student relationships was not examined, presenting a conceptual gap that the current study addresses.

Wanjiru (2022) examined the impact of gender-responsive leadership and professional development on teacher performance in rural Kenyan schools. Based on Social Cognitive Theory, which highlights teacher self-efficacy and observational learning as key determinants of performance, the study collected data through comprehensive interviews with teachers and administrators. Findings demonstrated that gender-responsive leadership and targeted training enhanced teachers' professional confidence, classroom management skills, and overall engagement. A contextual gap remains, however, since the study concentrated on rural schools in central Kenya, which may differ culturally from Marsabit County's pastoralist communities. A methodological limitation was also identified in the study's reliance on self-reported data without direct classroom observation.

Adebayo et al. (2023) conducted a study in Nigeria examining the relationship between gender equity in workload distribution and teacher performance in public primary schools. The study found that equitable allocation of teaching responsibilities and administrative tasks among male and female teachers significantly reduced occupational stress and improved instructional quality. Using regression analysis, the study demonstrated a statistically significant positive relationship between equitable workload practices and teacher performance outcomes. Although conducted in a different national context, the findings offer comparative insights applicable to the Kenyan ECDE context. The present study builds upon these insights by testing

similar relationships within the specific socio-cultural and institutional context of Marsabit County.

Palikhe (2023) investigated the role of workplace inclusivity in enhancing collaboration and organizational commitment among public sector employees in Nepal. Using a quantitative survey design with a sample of 240 respondents, the study found that inclusive practices, including gender-sensitive policies, significantly improved employees' organizational commitment, interpersonal relationships, and collective performance outcomes. While the study was conducted in a different regional context, its theoretical and empirical insights regarding inclusivity and performance are applicable to the ECDE teaching workforce in Marsabit County, particularly in understanding how gender diversity practices foster teamwork among teachers.

### **3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study employed a descriptive research design to examine the effect of gender diversity practices on the performance of ECDE teachers in Marsabit County, Kenya. The research focused on gender diversity dimensions, including equitable communication of gender policies, equal access to training and professional development, fair workload distribution, enhanced collaboration, and overall job performance. The target population comprised 335 respondents, including ECDE teachers, sub-county coordinators, ward administrators, and institutional administrators. A stratified random sampling technique was used to ensure fair representation across the various sub-counties and institutions, while purposive sampling was used to identify key informants among administrators and coordinators. Using Yamane's (1967) formula at a 95% confidence level, a sample size of 182 respondents was obtained.

The study adopted a mixed-methods approach, utilizing structured questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) through descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations, as well as inferential statistics, including Pearson correlation and multiple regression analysis. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically to identify recurring patterns and experiences related to gender diversity practices and their effects on teacher performance. Ethical considerations were observed through informed consent, guaranteed confidentiality, voluntary participation, and approval from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) as well as relevant educational institutions in Marsabit County.

### **4.0 RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **Response Rate**

This section presents the responses collected from the field and highlights the proportion of retrieved and unretrieved questionnaires. The results are summarized in Table 1.

**Table 1: Response Rate**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Retrieved	173	95.1

Unretrieved	9	4.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Research Data (2026)

The study results indicate that 173 questionnaires were retrieved, representing 95.1% of the total sample, while only 9 questionnaires (4.9%) were unretrieved. This high response rate reflects strong engagement from ECDE teachers and school administrators in Marsabit County, suggesting a genuine interest in issues related to gender diversity and teacher performance. A response rate exceeding 70% is generally considered acceptable for survey-based research, and a rate of 95.1% substantially exceeds this threshold, thereby enhancing the reliability and generalizability of the study findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The high participation rate further suggests that respondents were willing to share their experiences regarding gender diversity practices, reinforcing confidence in the validity of the data collected.

## Descriptive Analysis

### Gender Diversity Practices and Employee Performance

This section examines the effect of gender diversity practices on the performance of ECDE teachers in Marsabit County. Data were collected using a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 = Strongly Disagree and 5 = Strongly Agree, focusing on how teachers perceive the communication of gender policies, fairness in professional development, workload distribution, collaboration, and overall job performance. Table 2 summarizes the responses.

**Table 2: Gender Diversity Practices and Employee Performance**

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std. Dev
1. Gender diversity practices are clearly communicated to ECDE teachers	0.6	2.3	5.8	53.5	37.8	4.27	0.71
2. Equal opportunities are provided to both male and female teachers in training and professional development	0.6	3.0	6.1	55.0	35.3	4.21	0.70
3. Gender-sensitive practices promote fairness in workload distribution among teachers	0.6	2.9	7.1	54.2	35.2	4.21	0.69
4. Gender diversity initiatives have enhanced collaboration and teamwork among ECDE teachers	0.6	2.8	6.4	55.5	34.7	4.18	0.69

5. Gender diversity practices have improved overall job performance of ECDE teachers	0.6	2.9	5.9	53.8	36.8	4.21	0.69
<b>Cumulative Mean Score</b>						<b>4.22</b>	<b>0.69</b>

*Source: Research Data (2026)*

The study revealed that gender diversity practices are clearly communicated to ECDE teachers, with 53.5% agreeing and 37.8% strongly agreeing with this statement. Only 0.6% strongly disagreed, 2.3% disagreed, and 5.8% were neutral. The mean score of 4.27 with a standard deviation of 0.71 reflects strong consensus among respondents. These results suggest that clear and consistent communication of gender diversity policies enhances transparency, awareness, and teacher engagement, thereby promoting equitable working environments. This finding is consistent with Crossland et al. (2021), who emphasized that effective communication of diversity practices improves organizational cohesion, employee trust, and motivation.

Regarding equal opportunities for training and professional development, 55.0% of respondents agreed and 35.3% strongly agreed that both male and female teachers benefit equally from available opportunities. A mean score of 4.21 with a standard deviation of 0.70 reflects minimal variation in responses, suggesting that ECDE teachers broadly perceive fairness in skill development initiatives. This supports the argument by Ismail et al. (2021) that equal access to professional development contributes to improved employee performance and long-term job satisfaction.

Concerning fairness in workload distribution, 54.2% of respondents agreed and 35.2% strongly agreed that gender-sensitive practices promote equitable allocation of teaching and administrative duties. Only a small proportion expressed otherwise (0.6% strongly disagreed, 2.9% disagreed, and 7.1% were neutral). A mean of 4.21 with a standard deviation of 0.69 indicates consistency in the view that fair workload distribution reduces occupational stress, minimizes gender-based bias, and ensures that teachers can effectively fulfill their professional responsibilities. These findings align with Adebayo et al. (2023), who found that equitable work allocation is a significant predictor of improved employee engagement and performance in public educational institutions.

The study also assessed whether gender diversity initiatives enhance collaboration and teamwork among ECDE teachers. Results showed that 55.5% agreed and 34.7% strongly agreed, yielding a mean of 4.18 with a standard deviation of 0.69. These findings suggest that gender-inclusive policies create an environment conducive to collective problem-solving, stronger interpersonal relationships, and mutual professional support among teachers. This is consistent with Palikhe (2023), who found that inclusive workplace practices significantly enhance collaboration, organizational commitment, and collective performance among public service employees.

On the question of whether gender diversity practices improve overall job performance, a combined 90.6% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, recording a mean of 4.21 and a standard deviation of 0.69. This high level of agreement indicates that gender-inclusive

practices are widely perceived as positively influencing teacher motivation, professional satisfaction, and instructional productivity. These results are corroborated by Crossland et al. (2021), who observed that gender diversity directly contributes to higher employee output and improved organizational efficiency. The cumulative mean score of 4.22 with a standard deviation of 0.69 indicates that gender diversity practices play a significant and positive role in shaping ECDE teacher performance in Marsabit County.

### Performance of ECDE Teachers in Marsabit County

This section presents findings on the performance of ECDE teachers in Marsabit County, measured across dimensions of lesson preparedness, instructional quality, professional engagement, classroom management, and student learning outcomes. Data were collected using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree; 5 = Strongly Agree). Table 3 presents the descriptive results.

**Table 3: Performance of ECDE Teachers in Marsabit County**

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std. Dev
ECDE teachers consistently prepare and deliver well-structured lessons	2.3	4.0	10.4	50.3	33.0	4.08	0.91
Teachers demonstrate strong classroom management and child engagement skills	2.3	5.8	12.7	47.4	31.8	4.01	0.95
Teachers actively participate in professional development activities	3.5	6.9	14.5	46.2	28.9	3.90	1.02
Gender-inclusive environments have contributed to improved student learning outcomes	2.3	5.2	13.3	49.7	29.5	3.99	0.94
Overall, ECDE teacher performance has improved due to gender diversity practices	2.9	5.2	11.6	50.3	30.1	4.00	0.96
<b>Aggregate Mean Score and Std. Deviation</b>						<b>4.00</b>	<b>0.96</b>

*Source: Research Data (2026)*

The descriptive findings presented in Table 3 indicate a generally positive perception of ECDE teacher performance in Marsabit County, with an aggregate mean of 4.00 and a standard deviation of 0.96. The highest-rated dimension was lesson preparedness and delivery (M = 4.08, SD = 0.91), suggesting that teachers demonstrate adequate instructional planning and

structured content delivery. Classroom management and child engagement recorded a mean of 4.01 (SD = 0.95), indicating that most teachers are perceived to effectively maintain learning environments conducive to early childhood development.

Active participation in professional development activities recorded a mean of 3.90 (SD = 1.02), reflecting moderate but slightly lower agreement. This suggests that while most teachers engage in professional learning, certain barriers possibly related to geography, workload, or resource availability continue to limit full participation. The perception that gender-inclusive environments contribute to improved student learning outcomes scored a mean of 3.99 (SD = 0.94), indicating broad agreement that gender diversity practices extend beyond teacher welfare to positively influence the quality of learning experienced by young children.

Overall improvement in ECDE teacher performance attributed to gender diversity practices recorded a mean of 4.00 (SD = 0.96), further affirming that inclusive gender practices are associated with meaningful gains in instructional performance. These findings are consistent with Mugambi (2024), who demonstrated that gender-sensitive training programs improve teacher productivity and professional engagement. Similarly, Wanjiru (2022) noted that gender-responsive leadership enhances teacher confidence and classroom effectiveness in rural Kenyan schools.

### **Model Summary**

Table 4 presents the model summary for the regression analysis examining the relationship between gender diversity practices and ECDE teacher performance in Marsabit County.

**Table 4: Model Summary**

<b>Model</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>R Square</b>	<b>Adjusted R Square</b>	<b>Std. Error of the Estimate</b>
1	.651 <sup>a</sup>	.424	.420	.48763

*a. Predictors: (Constant), Gender Diversity Practices*

The correlation coefficient (R = 0.651) indicates a moderate to strong positive relationship between gender diversity practices and ECDE teacher performance. The coefficient of determination (R<sup>2</sup> = 0.424) shows that gender diversity practices account for 42.4% of the variation in teacher performance in Marsabit County. The adjusted R<sup>2</sup> of 0.420 confirms that the model provides a reliable and stable fit after accounting for the number of predictors. The standard error of estimate (0.488) is relatively small, indicating that predicted values are reasonably close to observed values, reflecting adequate model precision. These results collectively demonstrate that gender diversity practices constitute a substantive and meaningful predictor of ECDE teacher performance.

### **ANOVA**

The ANOVA results in Table 5 were used to assess the overall statistical significance of the regression model.

**Table 5: ANOVA**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	29.847	1	29.847	125.436	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	40.553	171	.239		
<b>Total</b>	<b>70.400</b>	<b>172</b>			

a. *Dependent Variable: ECDE Teacher Performance*

b. *Predictors: (Constant), Gender Diversity Practices*

The ANOVA results indicate that the regression model is statistically significant ( $F = 125.436$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). This confirms that gender diversity practices have a significant effect on the performance of ECDE teachers in Marsabit County. The F-statistic confirms that the overall model provides a good fit for the data and that the observed relationship between the independent and dependent variables is statistically meaningful and is not attributable to chance.

### Regression Coefficients

Table 6 presents the regression coefficients for the relationship between gender diversity practices and ECDE teacher performance.

**Table 6: Beta Coefficients for Gender Diversity Practices**

Model	B (Unstandardized)	Std. Error	Beta (Standardized)	t	Sig.
1 (Constant)	1.187	0.284		4.179	.000
Gender Diversity Practices	0.648	0.058	0.651	11.200	.000

a. *Dependent Variable: ECDE Teacher Performance*

The unstandardized regression coefficient for gender diversity practices ( $B = 0.648$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) indicates that a one-unit increase in gender diversity practices is associated with a 0.648-unit increase in ECDE teacher performance. The standardized coefficient (Beta = 0.651) confirms the relative strength of this predictor in explaining performance variation. The corresponding t-value ( $t = 11.200$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) confirms that the effect is statistically significant at the 0.001 level. These results lead to the rejection of the null hypothesis ( $H_{01}$ ) that gender diversity practices do not significantly influence the performance of ECDE teachers in Marsabit County, Kenya. The regression equation for predicting ECDE teacher performance is:

$$\text{Teacher Performance} = 1.187 + 0.648 (\text{Gender Diversity Practices})$$

This equation implies that even in the absence of formal gender diversity practices, a baseline level of performance exists (constant = 1.187). However, as gender diversity practices strengthen in quality and consistency of implementation, teacher performance increases proportionately, confirming the practical and statistical significance of gender-inclusive human resource strategies in ECDE institutions in Marsabit County. These results are consistent with findings by Turi et al. (2022), who demonstrated that structured diversity management

practices, supported by competent leadership, significantly enhance organizational and individual performance outcomes.

## **5.0 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY**

The analysis reveals that ECDE teachers in Marsabit County generally perceive gender diversity practices positively, with a cumulative mean of 4.22 (SD = 0.69) across all measured dimensions. The study found strong evidence that gender diversity policies are clearly communicated to teachers (M = 4.27, SD = 0.71), that equal opportunities are provided in training and professional development (M = 4.21, SD = 0.70), and that gender-sensitive workload distribution is perceived as equitable (M = 4.21, SD = 0.69). Gender diversity initiatives were also found to enhance collaboration and teamwork among teachers (M = 4.18, SD = 0.69) and to improve overall job performance (M = 4.21, SD = 0.69).

The regression analysis confirms that gender diversity practices significantly and positively influence ECDE teacher performance ( $\beta = 0.648$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), explaining 42.4% of the variation in performance outcomes. This relationship demonstrates that ECDE institutions with stronger and more consistent gender diversity practices achieve superior performance across multiple dimensions, including instructional quality, classroom management, professional engagement, and student learning outcomes. These findings provide empirical support for Diversity Management Theory, which posits that deliberate and structured management of gender diversity enhances organizational and individual performance.

## **6.0 CONCLUSION**

The study concludes that gender diversity practices are a significant and positive driver of ECDE teacher performance in Marsabit County, Kenya. The strong positive relationship established between gender diversity practices and teacher performance demonstrates that schools and ECDE institutions that invest in inclusive gender policies achieve better outcomes in instructional quality, classroom management, teacher engagement, and learner development. While ECDE teachers in Marsabit County broadly perceive gender policies as clearly communicated and fairly implemented, opportunities exist to deepen these practices, particularly in ensuring full and equal access to professional development, reducing workload inequities, and building stronger gender-sensitive leadership at the institutional level.

The findings further reveal that effective gender diversity practices help to address some of the structural challenges facing ECDE service delivery in Marsabit County, including teacher disengagement, low professional morale, and a limited culture of collaboration. Institutions that embed gender equity as a core element of their human resource management strategies are better positioned to attract, retain, and develop high-performing teachers, ultimately improving educational outcomes for young children in the county.

## **7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Teachers Service Commission and the Ministry of Education should strengthen the communication and implementation of gender diversity policies in ECDE institutions in Marsabit County. Regular sensitization workshops, policy briefings, and open consultation

forums should be organized to ensure that all teachers are informed about their rights and entitlements under gender equity frameworks. Clear communication of gender policies has been shown to improve transparency, institutional trust, and overall performance.

ECDE institutions in Marsabit County should establish structured and equitable access to professional development opportunities for both male and female teachers. Training programs should be designed to accommodate the geographical and logistical constraints of the county, through mobile training units, distance learning platforms, and decentralized in-service training sessions. Equitable access to capacity-building initiatives will enhance teacher confidence, competence, and instructional quality.

School administrators and sub-county coordinators should develop transparent workload allocation frameworks that ensure fair distribution of teaching and administrative duties between male and female teachers. Structured workload policies will reduce the risk of gender-based discrimination in task assignment and contribute to a more motivated and productive teaching workforce. Administrators should receive targeted training in gender-sensitive human resource management practices.

The County Government of Marsabit should invest in gender-responsive leadership development programs for school heads and ECDE coordinators. Leaders who champion gender equity and inclusive practices have been shown to foster higher teacher engagement, stronger professional collaboration, and improved student outcomes. Leadership training that integrates gender sensitivity as a core competency will strengthen institutional culture and sustain performance improvements over time.

## **8.0 AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

Future research should consider examining the moderating role of school leadership styles on the relationship between gender diversity practices and ECDE teacher performance in Marsabit County and other arid and semi-arid regions of Kenya. Longitudinal studies that track changes in teacher performance over time following the introduction of gender diversity interventions would provide valuable insights into the sustainability and long-term impact of such practices. Comparative studies examining gender diversity practices across counties with varying cultural and socio-economic contexts would also strengthen the generalizability of findings and inform national education policy on gender mainstreaming in ECDE.

Further research should explore the intersectionality of gender, ethnicity, and age diversity practices and their combined effects on ECDE teacher performance, particularly in multi-ethnic counties such as Marsabit. Qualitative studies that capture the lived experiences of female ECDE teachers navigating traditional gender norms in pastoralist communities would enrich understanding of the barriers and enablers to effective gender diversity implementation at the classroom level.

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