



## Determinants of Sustainability of Mother Tongue Based Multilingual Education Programs in Tana River County, Kenya.

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**Abstract:** Latest research in policy enactment has shown a considerable failure in policies in developing countries. One of the challenges facing the execution of the language in education policy in Kenya has been its sustainability, yet the policy has been in existence since 1976. The LiEP has been seen to be an answer to the matters of quality yet its implementation levels have been significantly low. The main purpose of this study is to investigate the determinants of the sustainability of mother tongue based multilingual education (MTBMLE) programs which are guided by this policy. The research study targets a population of 1,444 and employ mixed methods of research. Multi-method designs are generally intended to complement one information source with another, or triangulate on an issue by utilizing different data sources to approach a research problem from a different points of view. Data was gathered using questionnaires, interview and Focused Group Discussions. Frequency and percentages statistics were used. The study revealed that there are relationships between language in education policy, availability of material resources, availability of human resources and involvement of stakeholders in the sustainability of mother tongue based multilingual education programs.

**Key words:**

**Language in Education Policy (LiEP):** the policy that guides the usage of languages in school either as a medium or language of instruction or as a subject.

**Language of Instruction (LoI):** the language used by a teacher to teach the curriculum of an education system. This term is used synonymously with the school language and the medium of instruction.

**Mother Tongue (MT):** the first language a child is exposed to or the language of the catchment area of the school.

**Bilingual Education (BE):** an education system where the children receive educational instruction in two languages, one of them being the mother tongue of the children in the school.

**Multilingual education (MLE):** an education system where the children receive educational instruction in mother tongue and at least one other language that are used as language of teaching in school.

### Introduction

In every corner of the world, young children are learning languages at home that differ from the dominant language used in their broader social world. These children arrive at school with a precious resource: their mother tongue well known as the Mother Tongue (MT) or the first language (L1). Typically, when minority and indigenous language children begin pre-school or primary school, they must learn the language used for instruction in schools to fit in socially and succeed academically. Most of the times, these learners receive education exclusively in the second language (L2). It is quite obvious that these official language programs do not support the children of the minority language to develop competence in L1. Furthermore, the language policies that inform these programs diminish the knowledge and cultural backgrounds associated with minority children's L1. Persistence school drop-outs and poor academic performances among the minority children are rooted from the Language in education Policies (LiEP) (UNESCO, 2000). However, there are many initiatives in many parts of the world to provide formal support for the minority children to continue developing competence in L1 and self-confidence as pupils, while also learning other additional languages.

The United Nations Universal Declaration on Human Rights (1948) on the other hand, affirms the right to education without any discrimination. Article 2 of this vital document creates the basic principle against discrimination on the grounds of languages. Article 5 of the 1960 Convention and Recommendation against Discrimination in Education precisely recognizes the right of national minorities to conduct their educational activities including the teaching in their own mother tongues (MT). More recently, a number of other UN declaration and conventions supports the rights of minorities, including indigenous people to have instruction or learn in L1 or their heritage language. Some of these documents include: Religious and Linguistic Minorities (1992, Article 4); 1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (Article 45); the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Persons belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (1992, Article 4); the 1989 Convention on the Rights of



the Child and the 2007 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. All these efforts demonstrated, to serve the basic needs for all, require more than a recommitment to basic education as now exists. Looking closely at these declarations what is needed therefore is an expanded vision that surpasses resource levels, institutional structures, curricula and conventional delivery systems while building on the best practices (Cummings, 1995).

### **Statement of the Problem**

Having been met at crossroads on which languages should be used for instruction in schools; Kenya enacted a bill in the famous Constitution of Kenya 2010. In the current constitution of Kenya (2010), the Bill of rights highlights education as a human right for all Kenyans. Thus Kiswahili language assumed status as a national and official language. This development is crucial with regard to the implementation of mother tongue based multilingual education (MTB/MLE) program. Furthermore, the language in education policy (LiEP) in Kenya emphasizes on mother tongues and Swahili in rural and urban centres respectively. It promotes the inclusion of pupils' mother tongues (MTs) as languages of instruction (LOI) in the early years of school and as a subject. In more urban areas, they will also be familiar with Swahili since this is used among mixed languages groups while English is a third language learned at school (KIE, 2002). Despite the government of Kenya enacting a policy on Mother tongue education, its implementation is still wanting in many parts of the country especially among diverse and yes minority indigenous communities like in Tana River County thus affecting its sustenance.

Multilingual education aims at improving learning and developing confidence and self-esteem, which are among the most powerful engines of development. Successful MLE programs involve support from a variety of agencies from the national to the county level, government departments, universities, teachers, colleges and research institutes, international and local organizations, local school, donor agencies, and the minority communities themselves. This form of multi-agency collaboration is an important feature of programs that are sustainable over time in diverse settings (Mahidol University, 2016).

In Kenya, we have seen that some minority languages are being assimilated by the majority group languages. For instance in Tana Delta, the Mwina community is being assimilated by the Pokomo language which is the majority community. It is good to note that without using the indigenous languages to our children, and then the minority group languages may come to extinct. It is therefore important to use mother tongue as a medium of instruction in schools in order to conserve the languages for the future generation.

In Coast region parts of Kenya, various Multilingual Education programs were established but the biggest problem is the lack of evidence on the effectiveness and sustainability of such programs. A study of these factors that influence the sustainability of multilingual education programs should help programs initiators, funders and educationist learn from programs that are currently ongoing and assist them to modify the parts of the program that are not working well. This study provides information to other communities who want to plan their programs. Furthermore, a study of this nature has not been ventured yet, therefore this study will give evidence of success in existing programs to encourage communities and people in power to support similar endeavors.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the determinants that influence the sustainability of mother tongue based multilingual education programs among communities in Tana River County Kenya.

### **Objective of the Study**

The study was based on the following objectives:

- To establish how the language in education policy influences the sustainability of mother tongue based multilingual education programs among communities in Tana River, County Kenya.
- To examine how the availability of material resources influences the sustainability of mother tongue based multilingual education programs among communities in Tana River, County Kenya.
- To assess how the availability of human resources influences the sustainability of mother tongue based multilingual education programs among communities in Tana River, County Kenya.
- To determine the influence of stakeholders in the program for the sustainability of mother tongue based multilingual education programs among communities in Tana River, County Kenya.



### **Research Questions**

The study was based on the following research questions:

- To what extent does the language in education policy influences the sustainability of mother tongue based multilingual education programs among communities in Tana River, County Kenya?
- To what extent does the availability of material resources influences the sustainability of mother tongue based multilingual education programs among communities in Tana River, County Kenya?
- To what extent does the availability of human resources influences the sustainability of mother tongue based multilingual education programs among communities in Tana River, County Kenya?
- To what extent does the stakeholders' involvement influences the sustainability of mother tongue based multilingual education programs among communities in Tana River, County Kenya?

### **Hypothesis of the Study**

This Study was guided by the following alternative and null hypotheses to be tested at the 95% level of significance:

- $H_0$ : The language in education policy does not influence the sustainability on mother tongue based multilingual education programs.
- $H_1$ : The language in education policy significantly influences the sustainability on mother tongue based multilingual education programs.
- $H_0$ : The availability of material resources does not influence the sustainability on mother tongue based multilingual education programs.
- $H_1$ : The availability of material resources significantly influences the sustainability on mother tongue based multilingual education programs.
- $H_0$ : The availability of human resources does not influence the sustainability on mother tongue based multilingual education programs.
- $H_1$ : The availability of human resources significantly influences the sustainability on mother tongue based multilingual education programs.
- $H_0$ : The support by the education stakeholders for mother tongue based multilingual education programs does not influence the sustainability on mother tongue based multilingual programs.
- $H_1$ : The support by the education stakeholders for mother tongue based multilingual education programs significantly influences the sustainability on mother tongue based multilingual programs.

### **Delimitations of the Study**

The study was carried out in Tana River County and confined itself in Tana Delta Sub-County. The study focused on the factors influencing the effective sustainability of mother tongue based multilingual education which also considered only four factors which include; language in education policy, availability of material resources, availability of human resources and the participation of stakeholders in the program. The rationale of choosing Tana River County as the area of study was because Bible Translation and Literacy (BTL) in partnership with the government of Finland had begun assisting the Ministry of Education in implementing the language in education policy. Furthermore, the researcher herself was directly involved in the implementation of that program, therefore, there are high possibilities that she may have received funding to facilitate the study variables that would have been useful to the organization. The area was also accessible by road.

## **Literature Review**

### **The concept of mother tongue based multilingual education**

The concept of Mother tongue based multilingual education is the use of students' native language and two or more additional languages as the Languages of Instruction (LoI) in school, according to (Malone, 2007). In other perspectives, the term is used to refer to Bilingual Education (BE) across numerous language groups; each community using their own indigenous language together with the official school language for instruction. She added that in some countries in South Asia, MTBMLE comprises of four languages; the students' mother tongue or first language, the national language, a regional language, and an international language.

Generally, at the age children start schooling, they have commenced attaining self-confidence in their capacity to communicate in their mother tongue in a meaningful way. The children have developed the basic knowledge and experience through observation and interaction with fellow children as well as adults in the environment they live in. That language, knowledge and experience the child acquired from the community, forms the basic foundation that is required in the classroom for their learning. Malone, (2007) asserts that there are two challenges facing the children from ethno-linguistic communities. First, some do not have access to



education at all. Those who have access to education, their knowledge, language and experience are treated as a disadvantage since they do not speak the official language of the education system. Their language has no place in school instead the learning resources and the LOI is a language that they are not familiar with hence they do not understand. Their learning and their problem solving skills, their experiences on how things work in their own social setting and culture does not serve them since the school setting is that of dominant civilization (Malone, 2007).

### **Sustainability of mother tongue based multilingual education**

Sustainability is the ability of projects to maintain their services, operations and benefits after their exit, the beneficiaries should be able to them. The term sustainability integrates social, environmental and economic responsibilities (Mwendwa et al., 2009). Sustainability should create equilibrium between social, economic and environmental aspects of the project life cycle. The main principles of sustainability that can be a guideline in the implementation of sustainability concept in project management include the following; harmonizing social, environmental and economic pillars which should all be incorporated and satisfied throughout the project (OECD, 2008).

The importance of sustaining mother tongue based multilingual education programs is crucial since the availability of the material resources will help in cultural and language conservation for future generations. It also helps in language development process. When the teachers are fully knowledgeable about multilingual education they will be able to well implement the Language in education policies well hence both the teachers and the pupils will appreciate their own culture and respect other cultures too.

### **Language in Education policies and mother tongue based multilingual education programs**

Policies are set of deliberate system of principles and guidelines that are formulated and enforced by the leading body of an organization or a government so as to direct and set boundaries in its actions in quest of long-term goals. Policies are useful in the implementation management of various systems, applications and networks for national development. Language policy is what a state does officially through the legislation to determine how languages in that government are used, to promote language skills that are necessary to meet national priorities, or to create the rights of persons or groups to utilize and uphold languages. Bonaya, (2012) asserts that, the education language policy is the development through which principles, goals and contents of a language policy can be appreciated in practices of education. In language in education, there exist supportive policies and non-supportive policies that determine the efficiency of programming and implementation.

Several studies have been done on the issue of Education policies and MTBMLE practices (Arther, 1997; Muthwii, 2004; Ejieh, 2004; Gfeller& Robinson, 1998; Rollnick& Rutherford, 1996 and Hornberger, 2001). For example, Hornberger's (2001) conclusion, she opposed that the one-language one-nation belief of language policy and national identity is not anymore the only existing policy worldwide. Typically, language in education policy emphasizes on issues around pedagogy and language rights of socio-linguistics which has political perceptions. (Powel, 2002; Kioko and Muthwii, 2001; Jones, 2007 and Musau, 2003) state that strong and sustained MTBMLE programs requires supportive policies that uphold, recognize and give legal position to minority ethnic languages and the speakers of those mother tongue languages. They continued that MTBMLE should be part of formal and non-formal education systems.

Mbaatha (2009) asserts that language is an important tool for dissemination of knowledge. The implementation of language education policies in schools is crucial hence children understand better when they are taught with a language they are familiar with. This was done through constant observation study (Dutcher, 1995; Thomas and Collier, 1997; Walter, 2003; Patrinos and Velez, 1996). A key goal of education is to also help the learner to learn L2 after first facilitating with L1 that they already know. First language learning facilitates the learning of second learning. There is convincing evidence provided by Cummins (2000) and others of the principle of interdependence that the first language helps in learning the second language. This is because a person learns to read and write once and the same principle is used to learn other languages. Therefore the learner has to learn the first language well. In late-exit bilingual model, the second language is gradually introduced in the early grades while the child continues learning in the language they speak at home. According to the World Bank report, (2005), teachers use more effective and active teaching methods on children that understand the language being used. Cognitive development is promoted by supporting mastery of the first language hence needed to make learning of secondary language easy. A good example in Brazil, literacy acquisition had been linked to first language teaching. Several studies has proven that the use of the children's mother tongue has succeeded in raising the level of acquiring the literacy of Portuguese language which is their official language and local language, in addition, it has raised the academic performance in various academic subjects (World Bank, 2005).



In general, a solution to the issue of quality learning outcome has been researched in several countries in the world and evidence has shown that implementation of a well-planned language in education policy through bi-lingual or mother tongue based multi-language is the key to quality education (UNESCO, 2010; Save the children-SC-UK, 2007; DFID, 2005). This is evidently true especially for minority or small language community. For example, the primary reading program (bilingual education approach) in Zambia improved writing and reading scores on average by 585% and English improving by 360% (SC-UK, 2007; UNESCO, 2005; DFID, 2005). Other research on how LIEP improves quality has been documented in Brazil (Chacoff, 1989), Guatemala (USAID, 2000), Mali (Bender, 2005) and Papua New Guinea among other countries (SC-UK, 2007). This is mainly because children, who learn using mother tongue will first, be more active and engaged in the learning process, secondly, disseminate the new concept quickly, thirdly, will understand the lesson better and develop their self-confidence among other benefits.

The Constitution of Kenya (Republic of Kenya, 2010), gives individuals operating within the jurisdiction of the Kenyan government the right to speak their languages but, by implication, limits the use of such languages to non-official domains, which are the preserve of the mentioned official languages, i.e. Kiswahili and English. However, Kenya's Language in education Policy (LiEP), as stated in the Sessional Paper No. 14 of 2012 (Republic of Kenya, 2012), spells out arrangements for languages to share space in educational settings as follows: The National and the County Education Boards shall emphasize on the use of the official languages that is Kiswahili and English both in school and out of school as stipulated in the constitution of Kenya (2010). However, the language of the catchment area or Mother Tongue shall be used as a medium of instruction in Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE) and in the lower primary level children (0-8 years).

#### **Material resource and mother tongue based multilingual education programs.**

In program management, material resources are necessary to carry out the program tasks effectively. These resources include facilities, equipment, funding or anything or anything that would be needed for the completion of program activities. The key resources that are needed for the effective programming of MTBMLE include curriculum, materials, teachers and funding, infrastructures in schools and teachers training institutions among others. Education and curriculum are extremely important in human development (Graham, 2009). Ketele (2004) describes education as a process that promotes learning and harmonious development of the child. In line with Mother tongue based multilingual education, Malone and Malone, (2012) suggest that for the success of a program, it ought to be flexible so as to meet the needs of the minority communities to build the knowledge and experiences that the learners bring to school from home when they begin schooling. A curriculum should enable the learners develop a solid foundation in multilingual in their mother tongue and a quality bridge to transit to the second language and to foster continuity of use of both L1 and L2 throughout the primary education. Most importantly, the curriculum should be contextualized to the people's expectations and experiences (Dutcher, 2004). This is supported by a handbook and curricula revised in 2002 published for all mother tongues. The Kenyan curriculum guidelines provides for MTBMLE and MT in the sense that English is learnt throughout primary education and medium of instruction for other subject from class four to eight. Whereas MT is taught as a subject from standard one to three as well as used a medium of instruction from class one to three (KIE, 2002). The Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) formerly known as the Kenya Institute of Education (KIE) has the mandate to develop the curriculum. KIE had begun producing books in various languages Kiswahili included since 1967 for primary school use. During the same year, Kiswahili alongside MT was enacted as a LOI for Adult Education (Gorman, 1974). In 1968, the famous TujifunzeKusomaKikwetu (TKK) - (Let's learn in our mother tongue) series were introduced in 15 different mother tongues.

Material resources and material development process is another important factor MTBMLE that promotes the reading culture (Edwards, 2008; Alidou et al., 2006; Bloch, 2005). This process is guided by the curriculum. For a curriculum to have a successful MTBMLE programs the teaching and learning materials should be based on accepted and recognized theories of reading acquisition, theories of language acquisition and theories of learning. Besides, the materials should be based on types of development that are essential successful MTBMLE programs. These developments include: First is the language development; this helps the child to be fluent in oral and written in L1 and L2 and gain confidence to communicate and learn in both languages. Second is academic development; children attain education competencies, are successful and confident learners. Thirdly is the socio-cultural development; this is where the learners become proud of their cultural heritage and citizens of their state (Malone, 2012).

It is worth noting that, despite all that, there are challenges faced in the material development process of MTBMLE. According to the World Bank report, (2006) quality and quantity are the major problems facing the production of materials in local languages. This is because publishing of textbooks is expensive such that



pupils do not have enough books even in the national language. This is brought about by the fact that it is difficult to make profit on books publishing. In addition to that, the cost of publishing books increases fast as the child transit to the next level because the books become lengthier and more complicated. Chakava, (1992) estimated that nearly 90% of Kenya's book business comes from school textbooks, most of which are in English and Kiswahili while mother tongue has the depressing minority books.

Chiatoth, (2011) asserts that the government has not prioritized the funding of minority language activities thus leaving the responsibility to NGOs which cannot be totally relied upon since their continuity is short termed. On the other hand the community has always had the attitude that matters concerning education or educational programs are the responsibility of the government. To keep the production of the books at a low cost several developing countries produce the MTBMLE materials locally. The local NGO that are interested in retaining local language give minimal training to teachers. These teachers can develop teaching resources often with the help of the local communities who may give free or low cost resources. Chiatoth, (2011). In regard to this, a local NGO in Kenya Bible Translation and Literacy has been facilitating the development of MT materials with the help of the teachers whom they have trained to develop materials following the requirements of the KICD guidelines. They have developed MTE materials among the Pokomo, Giryama, Digo, Duruma, Orma, Tharaka and Sabaot communities among others. In our study, we will evaluate how material resources will influence the sustainability of mother tongues based multilingual education in Tana River County.

### **Human resource and mother tongue based multilingual education programs.**

Human resources are vital factor for the effective implementation of multilingual education (Varghese, 2004). Human resources can be separated into two main components which are; school leadership and administration and teachers. The school leaderships need to acquire important skills and qualities so as to lead the multilingual programs effectively. The head teacher must be the instructional leader who must have knowledge about the curriculum approaches. The school head should also have knowledge of the language teaching methods and be able to deliver the approaches to the multilingual education teachers. The school principals should be visionary leaders who are able to develop multilingual program and models for the schools, should be able to formulate school mission and vision and develop a strategic plan (Shaw, 2003 and Baker, 2006). (Montecel and Cortez, 2002) added that school head teachers should be effective managers and administrators as they motivate, inspire, support and communicate well with their staff. The principals also play a big role in identifying, securing and mobilizing human resources, financial resources and material resources.

The other significant component of human resource is the teachers and their development in the profession. (Haworth et al, 2004) clearly pointed out that literature does not determine the significance of teachers in the development of children's multilingualism. This was an explained further by (Krashen's, 1981) theory which says that the process of natural acquisition of a language helps to gain fluency of that language rather than learning through consciousness. (Lennberg, 1967) asserted that it is very important to engage the pupils in play-based activities so as they can easily develop language in the natural environment (Chomsky, 1965) According to Tabatadze, (2015), the teacher is the only qualified person who can form a natural setting and play-based activities for the learners. Therefore teacher's training and preparation is very important in MTBMLE transformation. Vergheze, (2004) argued that the highly debated and politicized nature of bilingual education, works as determining aspect in the creation of the roles of professions of bilingual teachers. Simultaneously, societal forces shaped by local context, influences the specialized roles of bilingual teachers and their individual life and experience (Vergheze, 2004).

On a different note, teachers and institutionalization of MTBMLE induction, is very effective to mother tongue education programming (Republic of Kenya, 2004; Banda, 2000; Malone and Malone, 2012; Graham, 2009 and UNESCO/OECD, 2005). Malone and Malone, (2012) affirms that the success of MTBMLE programs primarily depends a lot on the teachers in the classrooms. Therefore, in order for Mother tongue education teachers to help their learners succeed in education, the teacher should comprehend and follow precise pedagogical theories, principles and philosophies of learning essential to the execution of MTBMLE (Graham, 2009). There are two options available in such training; pre-service and in-service teacher training. It is unfortunate to note that pre-service teachers training institutions in many countries including Kenya, operate in difficult circumstances that they don't use mother tongue to provide instruction to the students in the formal education system. This has led many teachers to use English as the medium of instruction (Bonaya, 2012). However, in the case of the MTBMLE programs in Tana River County., the teachers are provided with regular in-service trainings by the organization implementing the programs. The training is not only to the teachers but rather to the head teachers and some education officials who are also trained to become Trainers of Trainers in order to sustain the programs even after the end of the funding.



During the teachers training course, the teachers learn how to deliver the curriculum content in a way that allows the learner who speaks and understand the school language to grow to their expected grade level standards (Graham, 2009). Unfortunately, the assumption in teachers that education program that uses the official language that the learners have the level of language fluency to learn in the specified official language. This assumption is not correct in many multilingual contexts in that children from non-dominant language perform poorly in formal education systems. Malone, (2010) has suggested including the following mechanisms in pre-service MTBMLE teacher training. These are: MTBMLE student background knowledge and skills; Trainee's language development; Theories and good practices relating to L1 development; Theories and exemplary practices relating to acquisition of L2; Theories and good practices relating to using L1 and L2 as languages of instruction for curriculum and instructional materials among others.

Teachers become conversant with the MTBMLE instructional materials and curriculum through effective training. It builds their confidence in planning classroom activities and using the material resources. Malone (2010) recommends that planning for the training of the MLE teachers starts by identifying the attitude, knowledge and skills that the MTBMLE teachers will require to be effective in the classrooms. Secondly, understanding the challenges faced by the children who do not know the school language when they commence their education. The teachers' trainers can provide good teaching models for the teachers to use in their classroom when they are committed in making the course a "learner centered" (Malone, 2011). Our study will evaluate how teachers training influence the implementation and sustainability of mother tongue based multilingual education in Tana River County.

#### **Stakeholders' involvement and mother tongue based multilingual education programs.**

Sustainability and relevance of programs beyond donor finding could be the greatest challenge in relation to MTBMLE. Many governments have been lukewarm in the involvement in the support or implementation of MLE programs (World Bank, 2005). According to Malone, effective MLE programming requires support from the stakeholders. Stakeholders are all the people who are directly or indirectly involved in the program and have particular interest in the program. For programs to succeed all the stakeholders need to be involved and support them, they need to encourage each other and share vision about the program in the community as well as building goals for the programs (Malone, 2010).

Perna and Swail, (2000) affirm that parents should be involved in these educational programs since they are one of the stakeholders in the education programme. Parents can greatly influence the political situation for bilingual education, and so without their involvement and readiness, ethnic minority students can also be involved the programme successfully. (Tabatadze, 2008). For quality assurance in MTBMLE programs parents should be involved in designing and implementation of the programme. This way there is going to be a decrease in social capital as well as be of help to the ethnic minority for success in education and future life (Perna and Titus 2005). The involvement of parents in multilingual education programs is a promising approach to addressing the problem of non-achievement of ethnic minority students due to lack of the official language proficiency (Tabatadze, 2008).

All discussed challenges in mother tongue education and literacy planning in minority language context indicates that community have no option but accept, take ownership of the programme so as to promote self-sufficiency on the basis of the continuity of the programme. The community should be the main stakeholder in terms of policy management and planning with the inter-community support ownership in development planning and educational promotion in particular. The main aspect of long term running of the project is the community to emphasize that there is necessary for the community to be self-reliant and self-driven in development which has to be encourage in all spheres of development. Trudell, (2010) explains that it is assured that the perspectives of the community elites are strongly influential on education and language policy and practice, from the native community to the boardroom and beyond. When influential people speak out, they can change their community. This proves that top-bottom approach in advocacy for the stakeholders' participation is crucial for successful MTBMLE. However, these stakeholders need to be managed well.

In a World Bank report, (2006) it says that in literacy and mother tongue education promotion, they face the challenge of attitude. The communities' attitude towards programs in its language tells whether they consider as an external property or owned by the community. In Mexico for example, they believe that the language of success is Spanish and that the local language which is Triquis should not be used by primary school teachers because the children already speak it at home (Juarez and Montesinos, 1988). This shows that the locals have a negative attitude towards their language and think that it is inferior. This makes parents think that education offered in local language is inferior. Parents want their children to acquire knowledge of national language so as not to be cut off from opportunities in international social and economic activities. To minimize on parental resistance on the use of MT as a language of instruction, campaigns should be conducted to inform the parents on the benefits of the program in areas where the programs were a success. In Mexico parents from



Tarahumara feared that the education offered in Tarahumara Region in the state of Chihuahua was of low standards compared to the one conducted Spanish. After the presenting of a three controlled study on the above, the parental support Tarahumara education increased drastically (Nunez, 1994). Tadadeju et al. (2001) consider that local ownership is brought about by the empowerment of local response.

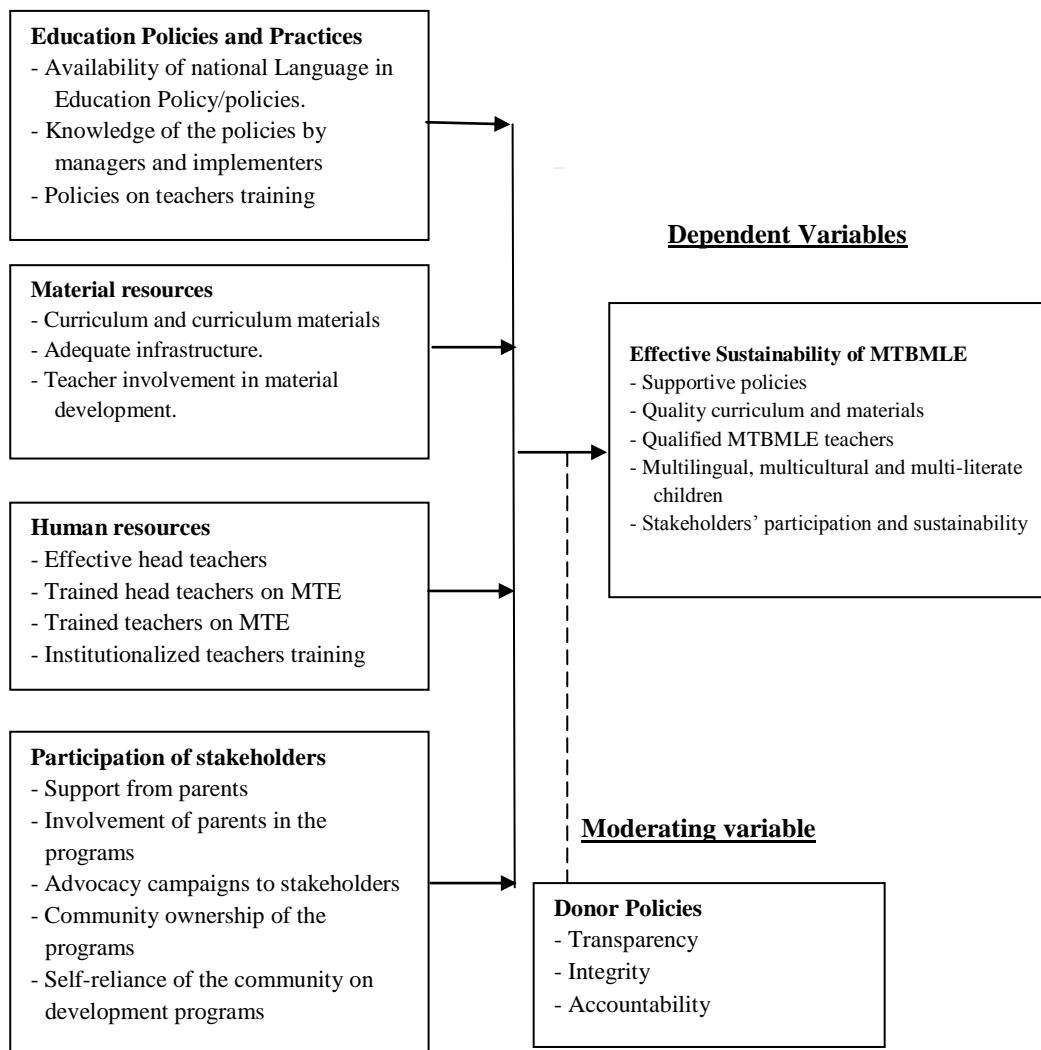
### Theoretical Framework

This study is guided by two theories, firstly, the Susan and Dennis Malone's theory of basic components of Bilingual Education/Multilingual Education programs. This theory will guide in the investigation to ascertain the effective implementation and sustainability of the MTBMLE program in Tana River County. Secondly, the Sen's capability approaches theory that will be used to note and recommend possible interventions in schools.

The theories of change based on Sen's capability approach emphasizes that well-being of people is determined by the level of capacities to achieve what they would like to achieve (Sen, 2001). The ability to read and understand is one of the basic capabilities on which others people are built. The more one is able to read and understand, the wider and greater their real choices of life are. Giddens' theory of structuration also suggest that change comes from personal choices to change their pattern of behaviours that comes after reflecting on observed alternative behavioural patterns (Giddens, 1984)

**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**

#### Independent variables





In the conceptual framework illustrated in Figure 1, the factors influencing effective sustainability of mother tongue based multilingual education among communities on Tana River County are outlined. The framework assumes that the above mentioned aspects directly influence the effective implementation and sustainability of the language in education policy. However, there are other extraneous factors like politics geographical and unforeseen factors which could be a challenge in implementation hence effective sustainability.

### **Research Methodology**

The research design that was adopted in this study is descriptive in nature. This research employed multi-method of research designs to triangulate on issues by using different data collection sources. The target population of this study was 1,444. The population targeted included primary school pupils, teachers, and head-teachers, sub-county education officials and school board of managements and parents. The schools that were actively implementing the MTBMLE were 10 schools which comprise 1,200 pupils, 30 lower primary teachers, 10 head teachers, 194 Board of Management (BOMs) and parents, and 10 sub-county education officials.

This research relied on both primary data which was collected from respondents through administering of structured questionnaires interview and Focused Group Discussion (FGD) tools. The questionnaire contained close-ended questions and a five point Likert scale. The questionnaires were administered to the head teachers, lower primary teachers and education officials. The interview schedule was administered to randomly selected primary 1, 2 and 3 children while the FGDs guides were administered to the parents and the BOMs.

### **Data Analysis, Representation and Interpretation**

Questionnaires that were distributed to the different categories of respondents that included teachers, head teachers and education officials were all filled and no questionnaires were returned. Nevertheless, the researcher was not able to reach all the expected number of the parents and the Board of Management; however she managed to reach 58% of the participants. The interviews questions were administered to a group of class one, two and three pupils. The respondents' rate was 76%, according to Mugenda and Mugenda, (2003), any response that is above 50% is considered researchable and acceptable hence the study is valid.

The study in the questionnaire revealed that the majority of the respondents had gone through Teacher Certificate representing 54.17% of the respondents. The majority of the respondents were female which represents 70.83% and 66.67% of the respondents were married. For the children interview category, the dominant age group was 9years representing 29.25% of respondents in this category. The study unveiled that majority of the respondents were female 51.89% with a numerical value of 55. Table also indicates that majority of the pupils' respondents were class 1 and class 2 which represents 33.96% and 34.91% and numerical value of 36 and 37 respectively. In the Focused Group Discussions, majority of the participants were female at 65%.

### **Language in education policy significantly influences the sustainability on mother tongue based multilingual education programs.**

The first objective of the study was to determine how the language in education policy influences the sustainability of mother tongue based multilingual education programs. It was hypothesized that:

**H<sub>1</sub>:** There is significant relationship between language in education policy and sustainability of mother tongue based multilingual education programs.

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between language in education policy and sustainability of mother tongue based multilingual education programs.

From the findings in the questionnaires, it indicated that the statement which states that the Kenyan Language in Education Policy asserts that language of the catchment area should be used as a medium of instruction from pre-primary to primary 1-3. The majorities of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement and constitutes 58.33%. Very few of the respondents disagreed with the statements and constitute 4.17%. The statement which states a well-planned language in education policy through mother tongue based multilingual education is the key to quality education; the majorities of the respondents strongly agreed with it and constitute 54.17%. Very few of the respondents disagreed and constitute 4.17%. Language is an important tool for dissemination of information statement attracted 70.83% who strongly agreed while 29.17% agreed.

The statement that read teachers use more effective and active teaching methods on children that understand the language being used 58.33% strongly agreed with the statement while a few were undecided and constitute 12.5%. The learning of first language (L1) facilitates the learning of a second language (L2) is another statement that 62.5% strongly agreed to it while only 4.17% were undecided. The statement that reads funding for continuous policy research on language in education leads to sustainability of MTE programs 54.17% strongly agreed with the statement while 8.33% of the respondents were undecided.



From the focused group discussions, the parents admitted that they are aware about the language in education policies since they have been attending advocacy meetings about MTBMLE. They are also aware that their children are learning mother tongue in schools.

The interviews, it showed that 100% of the pupils learn Mother Tongue in school. The research also indicated that 37.74% of the children preferred to learn in Mother Tongue, 32.07% preferred to learn in Swahili and 30.19% preferred to be taught in English.

#### **Availability of material resources significantly influences the sustainability on mother tongue based multilingual education programs.**

The third objective of the study was to examine how the availability of material resources influences the sustainability of mother tongue based multilingual education programs. The researcher sought to get a general view of the availability of material resources to support MTBMLE. It was hypothesized that:

**H<sub>1</sub>:** There is significant relationship between availability of human resources and sustainability of mother tongue based multilingual education programs.

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between availability of human resources and sustainability of mother tongue based multilingual education programs.

The findings revealed that the statement a curriculum should enable the learners develop a strong foundation in MT and a quality bridge to transit to the second language(s), attracted 66.67% of the respondents who strongly agreed to it while 8.33% were undecided. The statement the curriculum should be contextualized to the learners' environment, expectations and experiences, majority of the respondents 58.22% agreed with the statement while very few respondents that constitute 4.17% disagreed. The statement that reads availability of MT teaching and learning resources is an important factor that promotes the reading culture attracted 79.17% that strongly agreed with it while only 4.17% were undecided.

Availability of resource materials promotes sustainable and quality mother tongue education is a statement that 79.17% strongly agreed with it while 8.33% were undecided. The statement that read teachers should be involved in the development of teaching and learning resources attracted 83.33% who strongly agreed with the statement, while only 4.17% disagreed. The final statement that read government allocation of funding for provision for MTE resources facilitates the sustainability of MTE programs attracted the majority of the participants who strongly agreed with it and constitute 58.33% while very few respondents disagreed with the statement and constitute 8.33%.

When the children were asked whether there are MTE books in their schools, 100% of them indicated that they have the books. 100% of the pupils also indicated that they read they read the books when they were asked. When the children were asked why they read the MTE books, table 4.14 indicated 49.05% of the pupils' understand the content more, 37.74% indicated that they like the stories and the illustration. This implies that the availability materials in schools have positive response in the learners since they are able to use them.

From the focused group discussion, it was confirmed that there are MTE books available in the schools. One of parents Habuya\* a class one parent say "My daughter has been telling me about the Pokomo language books in school, that she enjoys reading them and they have attractive illustrations and good stories". The parents also commented that the books are really important in schools because the learners are able to read and understand, however, they also said that the English books should also be used for the learners to be able to learn the language.

#### **Availability of human resources significantly influences the sustainability on mother tongue based multilingual education programs.**

The third objective of the study was to examine how the availability of material resources influences the sustainability of mother tongue based multilingual education programs. The researcher sought to get a general view of the availability of material resources to support MTBMLE. It was hypothesized that:

**H<sub>1</sub>:** There is significant relationship between availability of human resources and sustainability of mother tongue based multilingual education programs.

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between availability of human resources and sustainability of mother tongue based multilingual education programs.

The findings indicated that the statement which says head teachers should have knowledge of MT teaching methodologies and be able to deliver the approaches to the MTE teachers, majority of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement and constitute 54.17% and only 8.33% were undecided. The statement which states school heads should be effective managers and administrators so as to motivate, inspire, support and communicate well with their staff, majority of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement and constitute 75% while 8.33% of the respondents disagreed. 70.83% of the respondents agreed with the statement that reads teacher's training and preparation is very important in MTE transformation, while 12.5% were undecided.



The statement that says during the teachers training course, the teacher should be trained on how to deliver the curriculum content in a way that allows the learner who speaks and understand MT to grow to their expected grade level standards attracted 75% of the respondents who strongly agreed to the statement while only 4.17% disagreed. The statement that states teachers becomes conversant with the MTE instructional materials and curriculum through effective training, 66.67% agreed while 8.33% were undecided with the statement. Finally, the statement that says recruitment and deployment of sufficient of teachers influence the sustainability of MTE in schools attracted 62.5% who strongly agreed with the statement while only 8.33% were undecided.

Moreover, the parents agreed that it is important for the teacher to have knowledge on L1 so as they can effectively communicate with the children. They also suggested that the head teacher should ensure that all the class teachers of the lower classes are conversant with the language of the catchment area.

When the pupils were asked whether they learn Mother tongue in schools, the study indicated that 100% of the respondent learn mother tongue in schools. This shows that there is availability of teachers to teach MTBMLE in schools in Tana River County.

#### **Involvement of stakeholders significantly influences the sustainability on Mother Tongue based multilingual education programs.**

The fourth objective of the study was to determine how the involvement of stakeholders influences the sustainability of mother tongue based multilingual education programs. The researcher sought to get a general view of the availability of material resources to support MTBMLE. It was hypothesized that:

**H<sub>1</sub>:** There is significant relationship between involvement of stakeholders and sustainability of mother tongue based multilingual education programs.

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between involvement of stakeholders and sustainability of mother tongue based multilingual education programs.

The findings from indicates that the statement effective MTE programming requires support from the stakeholders, 50% of the respondents strongly agreed to the statement while only 4.17% disagreed. The statement that reads parents should be involved in MTE programs since they are one of the stakeholders in the education programme attracted majority of the respondents that strongly agreed and constitute 70.83% while 4.17% disagreed to that statement. The statement campaigns should be conducted to inform the parents on the importance of the MTE programs majority of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement and constitute 62.5%. Very few of the respondents were undecided with the statement and constitute 4.17%. 79.17% of the respondents strongly agreed to the statement that says community should accept and take ownership of educational programs so as to promote self-sufficiency on the basis of the continuity of the programs while only 4.17% were undecided. The last statement that reads support of other partners e.g. NGOs, CSOs assists in the sustainability of MTE programs attracted 70.83% of the respondents that strongly agreed with the statement while 4.17% were undecided.

From the children's interview in indicates that 88.69% of the respondents which is the numeric value of 94 in table 4.24: indicated that their parents were very supportive in helping children with school work while 11.32%, the numeric value of 12 indicated that their parents do not help them with school work. Out of the 94 pupils whom their parents helped them with homework, 40.23% indicated that their parents use Mother Tongue to help them, 25.53% use Swahili, 22.34% use mix languages while 11.70% use English. The research indicates that most parents are involved in their children's learning. Most parents use Mother Tongue to help their children with school work. This was also confirmed from the parents through the group discussions, they affirmed that they use mother tongue to explain concepts to their children so as to understand better. In the discussion, it was also discovered that the female parents are the one who are actively involved in the learning of the children, they are the majority who help their children with school homework, as well as attend school meetings when they are called for. In addition to that, the parents also confirmed that they are aware of the MTE programs running in their school since they have been continuous advocacy meetings in schools and in the villages.

From the findings of the FGDs, the BOMs and the parents thought that it is a good idea for the community to take ownership of educational programs, but the challenge facing is that they are not involved by the organizations to take ownership, "These organizations have good programs but the problem is they do not empower the community to take ownership of the programs that's why when they exit, the benefits are not sustained. Nevertheless, when given the chance, we will be willing to take ownership and mobilize for resources from the government, county government, NGOs and CBOs, to ensure the continuity of the programs' benefits," one BOM secretary uttered.



### **Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations**

This study was a form of sustainability research. Based on the study objectives and data analysis, the following are the main research findings. From the triangulation of the instruments analyzed from the questionnaires, interview and focused group discussions, it was confirmed that the results were similar in all the methods used.

The study sought to establish how the language in education policy influences sustainability of mother tongue based multilingual education programs among communities in Tana River County Kenya. The study revealed that there is a great relationship between language in education policies and mother tongue based multilingual education. The study found that 91.67% of the respondents affirmed that a well-planned LiEP through MTBMLE is the key to quality education. This has the same opinion as (UNESCO, 2010; Save the children-SC-UK, 2007; DFID, 2005) that implementation of a well-planned language in education policy through bi-lingual or mother tongue based multi-language is the key to quality education.

The study also examined how the availability of material resources influence sustainability of mother tongue based multilingual education programs among communities in Tana River County Kenya. According to literature review, the key resources in successful mother tongue based multilingual education include the availability of curriculum, teaching and learning materials and funding. Majority of the respondents 66.67% agreed that a curriculum should enable the learners develop a strong foundation in MT and a quality bridge to transit to the second language. Majority of the respondents 79.17% also acknowledged that availability of MT teaching and learning resources is an important factor that promotes children's reading. This findings agrees with (Edwards, 2008; Alidou et al., 2006; Bloch, 2005) that material resources and material development process is another important factor MTBMLE that promotes the reading culture. However, in Chakava's findings on matters of materials, he estimated that nearly 90% of Kenya's book business comes from school textbooks, most of which are in English and Kiswahili while mother tongue has the depressing minority books. The research revealed that only one publisher has shown interest in mother tongue in this area. There is need for more publishers to get on board so us to ensure sustainability of MTBMLE programs.

The research also assessed how the availability of human resources significantly influences the sustainability on mother tongue based multilingual education programs among communities in Tana River County Kenya. Majority of the implementers 91.67% responded positively that head teachers should have knowledge of MT teaching methodologies and be able to deliver the approaches to the MTE teachers, these findings agrees with (Varghese, 2004) that the school leaderships need to acquire important skills and qualities so as to lead the multilingual programs effectively. Also according to the findings, majority of the respondents 75% strongly affirmed that during the teachers training course, the teacher should be trained on how to deliver the curriculum content in a way that allows the learner who speaks and understand MT to grow to their expected grade level standards. These findings concurs with (Malone and Malone, 2012) that teachers and institutionalization of MTBMLE induction, is very effective to mother tongue education programming.

Lastly, the study also determined the involvement of stakeholders in the program for sustainability of mother tongue based multilingual education programs among communities in Tana River County Kenya. 87.30% of the implementers were positive about the statement which says that parents should be involved in MTE programs since they are one of the stakeholders in the education programme. The findings from the research also indicated that parents are involved in their children's learning; this was indicated at 88.68% from the children's responses. However, there is need for more advocacy so that the 11.32% of the parents to involve themselves in their children's education. In the findings, the majority of the respondents at 95.84% also approved that community should accept and take ownership of educational programs so as to promote self-sufficiency on the basis of the continuity of the programs. These findings approves (Malone, 2010) statement that for programs to succeed all the stakeholders need to be involved and support them, they need to encourage each other and share vision about the program in the community as well as building goals for the programs.

### **Conclusions**

The conclusion of this study is guided by the study's objectives. From the findings, it evidence that the alternative hypothesis which stated that there is significant relationship between language in education policy and sustainability of mother tongue based multilingual education programs was accepted. This means that there is high collaboration between language in education policy and multilingual education.

The study revealed that there is significant relationship between availability of material resources and sustainability of mother tongue based multilingual education programs. The alternative hypothesis for this was accepted. However, there is need for more publishers to publish books written in mother tongue to ensure effective sustainability.



The study has also revealed that the alternative hypothesis that there is significant relationship between availability of human resources and sustainability of mother tongue based multilingual education programs. However, there is need for the teachers to have institutionalized training on MTE while in teacher's college for effective implementation of MTBMLE programming.

Lastly, the alternative hypothesis that stated that there is significant relationship between involvement of stakeholders and sustainability of mother tongue based multilingual education programs was accepted. This means that community has to actively participate in the MTE programs and take ownership of the programs. The study revealed that parents are actively involved in the learning process of their children.

### **Recommendations**

From the research study findings, the researcher recommends that:

1. The government should ensure that the language in education policy is implemented in all schools. This will provide an opportunity for the effectiveness of EFA goals whereas all children will have access quality education. The children will be able to enjoy learning from known to the unknown.
2. The government should highly capitalize on research in education and institutionalization of multilingual education teachers training in colleges so as to exploit the benefits foreseen by the policy enactment.
3. The government and other funding agencies to highly invest in the education sector by providing sufficient resources for the effective implementation and sustainability of the language in education policy. More publishers should be encouraged to also venture in MTE business so that all languages to have access to education in their own language.
4. The communities should primarily own these MTBMLE programs and avail themselves in resource mobilizations for the successful implementation and sustainability of such project.

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