Influence of Parental Expectation of Early Childhood Education on Pre-Schoolers Access to Early Childhood Education in Kenya

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Abstract: Access and engagement to early childhood education worldwide helps prepare young children to succeed in school and become better citizens. The major challenge in Kenya was that Early Childhood Education (ECE) was left in the hands of the community and parents, resulting in a big variation in type and quality of ECE. Even with ECE being devolved to the county government, access to preschool education continue to be a challenge. Hence, the present study explored the influence parental expectation of early childhood education on preschoolers' access to early childhood education in Kenya. The objective of the study was to find out the influence of Parental expectation on preschoolers access to early childhood education in Kenya. The study adopted concurrent triangulation research design and was informed by Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979) supported by Emile Durkeim's Functional Theory (1858-1916). The target population included 21 head teachers, 228 ECE lead teachers and 863 parents and a sub-county education officer. The sample sizes were 9 head teachers, 43 ECE lead teachers, 76 parents and a sub-county education officer. The instruments of data collection were; questionnaires, interview schedule and document analysis. Validity of the instruments was enhanced through piloting and by experts. Reliability of the instruments was ensured by Test-Retest method. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and presented in form of tables, graphs and percentages. Qualitative data was coded and classified into major themes as they emerged. The findings revealed that there was a strong positive significant relationship of r=0.582 on parental expectations on access of preschoolers in Early Childhood Education in Kenya. It was concluded that the higher the level of education of parents, the higher their expectations on children's access to early childhood education centres. This means that children's access to preschools improves with the improvement of parents' normal positive expectations from pre-school education. It was recommended that policy makers and stakeholders come up with courses for adult literacy for parents who are illiterate as a pre-requisite tool for good accessibility of preschoolers to preschools. The researcher recommends a study on preschool environmental factor as determinants of preschoolers' access to early childhood education in Kenya.

Keywords: Early Childhood Education (ECE), Education for All (EFA).

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study:

Globally, the role of Education in improving the quality of life was well documented by various studies (Bruns, Mingat, and Rakotomala, 2003; and Psacharopoulos and Patrinos, 2004). Hence, ensuring the access to quality basic education to all children had been underscored by various international conventions, notably: The World Declaration for Education for All (EFA), The Millennium Declaration, the Dakar Framework for Action in 2000 and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (UNESCO, 2005). In addressing preschoolers' access to quality education, full enrolment, transition and

retention of children in Early Childhood Development and Education Centres was globally perceived as a greater step towards achieving education for all. However, with a lot of concern, there had been low preschool enrolment and retention in Sub Saharan Africa for over the last two decade (UNESCO, 2010).

Despite the low access to preschool Education in sub Saharan Africa, the UNESCO (2008) observes that pre-primary learners who have been enrolled in schools tend to perform better in school than those who have not. In addition, there were evidences of a positive correlation between early childhood learning and future holistic development and academic achievement of students in subsequent grades (Bradbury, 2007). This findings were further supported by a recent research carried out by various neuroscientists particularly on the brain that found a convincing evidence of the critical periods located within these early years for the formation of synaptic connections in the brain and for the full development of the brain potential (Mukanzi, 2005).

To date, finding a lasting solution to low enrolment, transition and retention of children in schools had been a great concern to many stakeholders in most parts of the world (Glick and Sahn, 2010). However, studies have so far indicated that this only be possible if the Education sectors of various counties involve parents who play a crucial role in the formative years of a child's development (Adeyemi, 2004). Lack of recognition of the vital roles played by parents and families in policy formulation and implementation have over the years been perceived as a contributing factor to the access of quality education and the lack of parental involvement in schools (Asiamah, 2013). This was because the parents play a crucial role in ensuring their children access quality education.

Globally, there was consistent evidence that equitable access to high quality preschooling markedly improves young children's readiness to succeed in primary, secondary and sub sequent learning (Little, Indika and Rolleston, 2011). Despite these global evidence however, the report observed that majority of the world's young children were excluded from preschool learning and others join class one without going through preschool Education (Bennett, 2012). The situation was found to be worse with young children who were marginalized by poverty and their parents don't understand their in role Early Childhood Education (UNICEF, 2014). The report further observes that children from well off families usually stand to benefit most from early childhood care and education. According to Pauline (2012), the global enrolment of children for preschool education in 2009 was 157 million children. This was an increase of 40% since 1999. But the gross enrolment ratio was still only 46%. In other words, more than half of the world's children don't get a chance to acquire preschool education which was the foundation for lifelong learning. The study further observed that a large proportion of children excluded from preschool education were from urban poor and /or rural families. The new data analysis by the GMR team for the 2012 Report further shows that the patterns of preschoolers' access to education vary globally however the situation was pathetic in most parts of the world.

In regard to preschoolers' access to basic education, a report by Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2012) indicates that some countries have full pre-primary enrolment (enrolment rates exceeding 90%) for example United Kingdom along with Germany, France, Norway, Denmark and Sweden were the leading countries in preschool enrolment of over 90%. The United States, ranks as one of the least performing countries in the OECD countries in preschool enrolment with 69% followed by Australia, Canada, Brazil and Greece with preschool enrolment less than 60% (OECD, 2012). This means that the developed countries were performing fairly well in the early childhood sector compared to developing countries. However, in the United States, between 30% and 40% of children joining kindergarten were estimated not be ready for school due to Low parental income and negative attitude towards preschool education (Lee and Burkman, 2002). These children were at an increased risk of leaving school without graduating.

In relation to preschoolers' access to basic Education, South Asia was one of the world region that facing a great challenge towards the achievement of universal basic education. This was because a higher number of children were being denied basic education (UNICEF, 2014). The report further observes that the magnitude of the numbers of out-of-school children (OOSC) in the region remains staggering despite efforts towards universal basic education. An analysis of household surveys shows that a total of 27 million children who should be in preschools and primary schools were out of school in Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. In Bangladesh alone, around a third (34 per cent) of preschool age children were not in school and in Indian 12.4% of preschoolers were not enrolled for preschool education.

In Australia, about 50% of children live in families with incomes below the median equivalised income level; one of the most commonly used poverty measure lines. This percentage was higher than most European nations (Redmond, 2008). This means that these children suffer greater family turmoil, live in more chaotic households and have fewer cognitive enrichment opportunities both at home and in their neighbourhoods this leads to poor performance, late enrolments for school and grade retention (Redmond, 2008 and Ridge, 2000).

In Africa, the number of children enrolled in early childhood was still low compared to the developed countries for example in 2007, only 10 per cent of African children aged four to six were enrolled in any form of early childhood programme (UNESCO 2010). In Ethiopia it was 4.2%, Burundi 7%, Rwanda 13.3% and Tanzania 29% (UNICEF, 2012). The Education for All Global Monitoring Report shows that Uganda had a gross enrolment in nursery schools of 2.1%. This was a decline from the 1999 figure which put the enrolment at 4 % (EFA, 2011). Further, the EFA Global Monitoring Report (2007) notes that in Sub-Saharan Africa, early childhood programmes were available only to a small fraction of the population, typically affluent urban families. For instance, the Democratic Republic of Congo, with 12 million children aged 0-6, had only 1,200 pre-primary schools, and 60% of these were private schools located in the capital province of Kinshasa, where just 10% of the total population lives.

According to the Global Monitoring Report (2005), in Guinea-Bissau, Rwanda, Equatorial Guinea, Madagascar and Nepal, more than half the children who enrolled in primary schools either repeat first grade or drop-out. In South Asia, 35% of all the children drop out-of-school. In Belize children were sixty times more likely to drop-out in Grade 1 than in Grade 2. These findings indicate that there was a major crisis during the first critical years of primary education across many parts of the developing world. Many children were dropping-out altogether or repeating classes, majority of them within the first two years. The problem was at its worst in countries where poverty, exclusion and other systemic factors exacerbate the situation.

Grantham-McGregor, Cheung, Cueto, Glewwe, Richterand Strupp (2007) note that low preschool enrolment rates in Africa would be explained by high levels of poverty, inadequate health and nutrition and cultural practices that limit enrolment of children in ECDE centres. According to Robert (2014) Socio-economic status depends on a combination of variables, including occupation, education, income, wealth, and place of residence. One major reason why these parental influences would impact so strongly on children was because the children spend more than ninety percent of their time from infancy throughout their childhood outside school under the influence of their parents (UNESCO, 2008).

In a study done in Tanzania in 2009 by Mtahabwa, it was established that there was a positive relationship between preschoolers' access to ECDE education relates and parental geographical location (Mtahabwa, 2011). Children in urban areas had better chances for participation in ECDE programs than their rural counterparts because the preschools were near their homes compared to their rural counterparts whose schools were far and in urban children were transported by their economically stable parents. Access according to geographical distance favoured urban children as it was also found elsewhere in the world including Bangladesh and Ghana (Mtahabwa, 2011). These findings were also supported by a study conducted by Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) in 2003 in selected African countries, (Benin, Ghana, Namibia, Kenya, South Africa and Zambia) that sought to compare characteristics of children enrolled in ECDE and of those not enrolled. The study also found out that children from farm residence (rural areas) were less likely to enrol in ECDE compared to the non-farm (urban) residents mainly because of the distance to be covered from home to school (ADEA, 2003). However, these studies did not establish the extent to which various parental factors predicted preschoolers' access to education which was established by the current study.

Many developing countries Kenya inclusive have devoted substantial proportions of their resources to the expansion of pre-primary Education in recent years. This expansion was believed to contribute to the improvement in enrolment, transition and retention of children in ECDE centre. However, the efforts had not been impressive and significant over the last two decades. Officially, in Kenya children aged three to five years were expected to be enrolled in ECDE centres. These children were considered eligible for enrolment such that by the age of six they proceed to standard one. Despite the Government policy, currently a large percentage (65 %) of the preschool children in Kenya was not attending early childhood education inclusively (MDG's, 2005). Pre-school enrolment in Kenya was even much lower when compared to other countries in the Sub-Saharan Africa, the Arab States, the Central Asia and South and West Asia (MDG's, 2005).

Over the last two decade, the government of Kenya had recognized Education as a basic right and a powerful tool for national development and poverty reduction (Ministry of Education, 2011). Hence over the years, the government had addressed the problems inherent in our education system and sector through a number of Committees and Task Forces with the main purpose of providing quality and relevant basic education to all its school going children. In addressing disparities in the access to basic education in all levels of learning, the Government of Kenya through Session Paper No. 1(2005) committed itself to an education system that guarantees access to quality and relevant education to every Kenyan child (Republic of Kenya, 2005). However, given the low enrolments in preschools in Kenya was an indication that the government's effort towards improving education had not brought impressive results. Hence, the present study seeks to establish the perceived causes of these treads.

In a report by KIE, majority of the parents were aware of the importance of providing ECE but their inability to meet the cost was a challenge to date (KIE, 2005). According to the policy framework on ECE, parental socio-economic factors had compromised the abilities of parents to give financial support for the early child Education. These findings were consistent with Kituta (2003) in her research in Shimba Hills in Kwale district that indicated that the majority of the parents do not participate in ECE activities because of financial constraints.

Access and participation in ECDE in Kenya were very low with a Net Enrolment Rate of 42% in 2009 and 50% in 2010. This means that 58% and 50% of the school-going age pupils were not in school in 2009 and 2010 respectively (GOK) policy framework on education, 2012). In addressing challenges related to preschool education in Kenya, the government ratified the Jomtien Education for all declaration in March 1990 and declared free education in 2003. However, the pre-primary school education access was still at 40% and worse in Nyamira which was at 39% (Uwezo Kenya learning assessment, 2010). This situation was worrying. But the Kenyan government was committed toward the achievement of EFA by involving the Ministry of Education, Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development, other development partners, churches and parents at large. Parents have also played a major role in the provision of ECDE, primary, Secondary, tertiary and higher education, but children enrolling in pre-primary schools have remained low. Parental factors have not been fully investigated especially in areas related to pre-primary level. Hence the current study seeks to fill this gap.

Despite the fact that the government of Kenya initiated Community Support Grants (CSG) in 2008 with the objective of enhancing the capacity of parents and communities to improve the access to ECDE services across Kenya (KESSP, 2005), a large percentage (35%) of children who were enrolled for class one in primary school do not pass through ECD programs (MoEST, 2003). This was an indication that the enrolments in ECDE centres in Kenya were still low (UNESCO, 2000). In Masaba North Sub-County, enrolment in public ECDE centres had been having a downward trend from 2013 to 2015. Despite the efforts of the Nyamira County to improve the access to preschool Education, the efforts have not impressive as illustrated in table 1.1.

Table 1.1: Masaba North Sub-County Enrolment in Public ECDE centres

Year	2013	2014	2015	% Decrease
Number of Pupils in Pre-School Centres	3992	3877	3801	4.8
Number of Pupils who did not complete the preschool education	323	432	412	3.9
Number of school going children (3-5 years old) who are not enrolled in the school.	124	102	112	9.3

Source: Masaba North Sub-County Sub county Education office (2017)

In spite of the efforts made in education in Kenya, a number of challenges still persist. These include cost of Education, inequalities and inequity in access to Education, high wastage rates, under-enrolment, low transition and retention of children in schools. The goal to make enrolment in early childhood education compulsory would not be achieved if factors contributing to low enrolment in the ECDE centres were not identified and addresses.

1.2 Statement of the Problem:

The constitution of Kenya (2010) and basic education Act (2013) gives every child a right to compulsory basic education. But, currently in Kenya, the national government does not contribute much towards the implementation of ECDE

programme. However, the provision of ECDE is the responsibility of the county governments in Kenya, community and the parents. While there was a consensus internationally that ECDE places children at a better start for primary education and later academic achievement in subsequent higher learning, the importance of ECDE has not been fully appreciated by the society. This could be explained by low enrolment in early childhood education centres especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, where the situation is worse with only 40% of children access to ECDE programmes. In Kenya, the access to preschool education was estimated at 42% in 2009 and 50% in 2010. This means that about half of the pupils were not enrolled for preschool education in the foresaid years.

In Masaba North Sub-County, enrolments in public ECDE centres, had a downward trend from 2013 to 2015 as enrolment dropped by 4.8%. Despite all efforts by the government to improve the access to preschool education, the efforts were not impressive. In addition, available literature reveal that there are very few studies with a focus on access to education especially at preschool level; hence the study sought to explore the influence of Parental expectation on preschoolers access to early childhood education in in Masaba North Sub-County, Kenya.

1.3 Purpose of the Study:

The purpose of the study was to explore the influence of Parental expectation of Early Childhood Education on Pre-schoolers Access to Early Childhood Education in Kenya.

1.4 Objectives of the Study:

The objective of the study was to find out the influence of Parental expectation of Early Childhood Education on Pre-schoolers Access to Early Childhood Education in Kenya.

1.5 Scope of the Study:

The study was restricted to Public Pre-Primary Schools in Masaba North Sub-County, Nyamira County Kenya. The study particularly addressed the influence of parental expectation of Early Childhood education of preschoolers' access to early childhood education in Masaba North Sub-County, Kenya. The study included the following respondents: 76 Parents, a Sub-county education officer, 9 head teachers and 43 ECDE lead teachers. The study was based on concurrent triangulation research design and was guided by Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems and supported by Emile Durkeim's Functional Theory (1858-1916).

1.6 Limitations of the study:

The present study also relied on self-report data from the parents and teachers; it was possible for some respondents to give responses that please the researcher or authority as opposed to their real perception regarding parental factors and preschoolers' access to preschool education. However, the researcher minimized this problem by using multiple methods of data collection and assuring confidentiality to all respondents by asking them to return questionnaires in a sealed envelope. Due to the difference in social-cultural contexts, the interpretations drawn in this study would have lacked sufficient local comparison on the various issues that we discussed. However the study used pertinent and related studies from other parts of the world to make comparisons. Given the literacy levels in Nyamira County, Some of the parents might not be able to read and write as they understood only the local language. So their response were influenced by the interpretation of the questionnaire item into mother tongue, hence parents' responses might have a generated diverse responses from the same question. The duration, within which data was collected, it was a rainy season which made general communication difficult resulting to reschedule the interviews.

1.7 Theoretical framework of the study:

The study was guided by Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems and supported by Emile Durkeim's Functional Theory (1858-1916).

1.7.1 Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory:

This study was guided by the ecological systems theory developed by Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979). The epistemological underpinning of this study recognizes the importance of the influence of parental factors on preschoolers' access to preschool education. In relation to the current study, Bronfenbrenner (1979) proposed a systems theory that place children's learning and access to education in an ecological perspective. This theory looks at children and parents within

the context of a system of relationships that form their environment. In this regard, Bronfenbrenner identifies five complex layers of environment each having an effect on a child's learning process (Morrison, 2007).

The theory recognized that individuals do not live in isolation but were influenced and influence others within the family, school and community. The theory asserts that an individual's development and learning occurs within a complex set of nested interconnected systems. The levels of nested systems were microsystems, mesosystems, exosystem, macrosystem and chronosystems. This study therefore adopted the ecological systems epistemology as presented in Figure 1.1
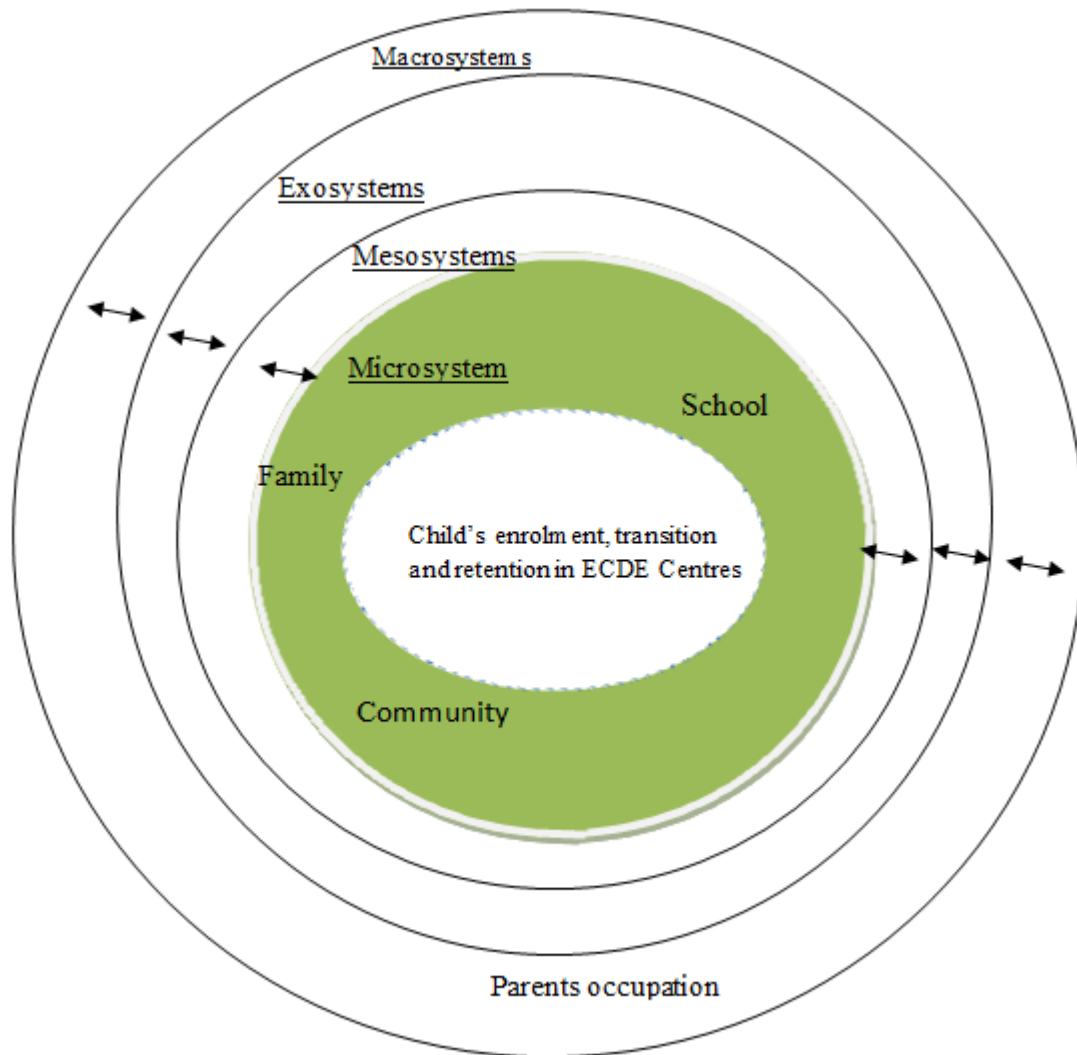

Figure 1.1: Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory

Source: Santrock (2007)

According to the theory, the Microsystems were the individual's immediate surroundings which had direct influence to an individual through activities and interactions with others (Berk, 2005). Bronfenbrenner emphasizes that experience was the key element of the Microsystems. Parents' Microsystems might include children, spouses, siblings, co-workers and friends. Therefore, parents' attitude and expectation from early childhood education might be affected by their family, peer group and work place.

The Mesosystem comprises links between Microsystems, such as home, school, and neighborhood. The Mesosystem was shaped by the various connections between and among individuals, objects, and circumstances (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Bronfenbrenner distinguishes four forms of these connections. The first was multistring participation; this type of

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connections takes place when the same individual participates in more than one setting, such as home, church and work place. Second connection was an indirect linkage which occurs when the same person did not actively participate in both settings, but nonetheless influenced through an intermediate link that facilitates this connection. The third connection was intersecting communication whereby persons in two or more settings directly interact with each other for the purpose of sharing information (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The fourth connection was inter-setting knowledge whereby information about a setting exists in a separate setting. In a context of this study the Mesosystem was particularly important in determining parents' attitude and expectation from pre-primary education; whereby parents, views and thoughts would be influenced by interaction with different settings such as home, school environment and work place.

The Exosystem was another level of the ecological systems theory. These were social settings that do not contain the focal person, but indirectly influence person through Microsystems and Mesosystems. For example parents' attitude, engagement and expectation would be influenced by their experience, support from administration, as well as the neighbourhood where the home was located. The macro system consists of the societal conditions, laws, cultural values, customs and economic patterns surrounding the parents. The macro system level was likely to influence how parents perceive and being satisfied with the quality of pre-primary education. For example, the cultural beliefs that children rearing and education was the responsibility of a mother would hampered fathers' involvement in their young children's education; as a result this would affected their perception and attitude with pre-primary education. The Chronosystem was the largest of all and encompassed the changes or similarities over the course of time not only in the characteristics of the person but also on the environment of an individual. These included changes in family structure, socio-economic status, education level and occupation.

Parental expectation, attitudes, social economic status and engagement with quality of pre-primary education was an important issue not only for service providers but also children and community at large. The application of this theory suggests that parental factors would be influenced by all systems over the course of time. These influences included immediate environment (family, home and peer group), experiences, culture, existing laws, policies and guidelines. Thus, the study acknowledged that the phenomena of parental factors and preschoolers' access to education were not objective but were actively constructed and constantly evolving as a result of social interaction in a particular environment or culture.

The theory was more appropriate for the current study because it acknowledges that a child did not develop in isolation, but in relation to the family, school, community and society at large. The theory further acknowledged that although teachers and school systems could provide a stable long-term relationship with children, the primary relationship should be with parents who provide a sense of caring that is meant to last long. It demonstrates that the most important settings for a young child were his/her family in which the child spends most of his/her time. The family also had a greater emotional influence on the young child. This theory postulates that child development was influenced by the interaction between characteristics of the child and the parents as well as the environmental context in which the child developed.

1.7.2 Emile Durkeim's Functional Theory:

This study was also based on Emile Durkeim's Functional Theory (1858-1916). Functionalism interprets each part of the society in terms of how it contributes to the stability of the whole society. The different parts were primarily the institution of the society, each of which was organised to fill different needs and each of which had particular consequences for the form and shape of the society. The parts all depended on each other. It focused on how it was essential that elements of a society worked together in order to function fully as a whole. It emphasizes the effort on the functioning of a supposedly stable, cohesive system. It attempts to provide an explanation on how human society was organized and what each of the various institutions did in order for the society to continue existing (Kombo and Thromp, 2006).

Durkheim actually envisioned society as an organism, and just like within an organism, each component plays a necessary part, but none could function alone, and one experiences a crisis or fails, other parts must adopt to fill the void in some way. Within functionalist theory, the different parts of the society were primarily composed of social institutions, each of that was designed to fill different needs, and each of that had particular consequences for the form and shape of the society. The parts all depend on each other. The core institutions defined by sociology and which were important to understand for this theory included: family, government, economy, media, education, and religion. According to

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functionalism, an institution only exists because it serves a vital role in the functioning of the society. If it no longer serves a role, an institution dies away. When new needs evolve or emerge, new institutions were created to meet them.

In most societies, the government, or state, provides education for the children of the family, which in turn pays taxes on which the state depends to keep itself running. The family was a dependent upon the school to help children grow up to have good jobs so that they could raise and support their own families. In the process, the children become law-abiding, taxpaying citizens, who in turn support the state. From the functionalist perspective, if all goes well, the parts of the society produce order, stability, and productivity. If all did not go well, the parts of the society then must adapt to produce new forms of order, stability, and productivity.

Functionalism emphasizes the consensus and order that exist in society, focusing on social stability and shared public values. From this perspective, disorganization in the system, such as deviant behavior, leads to change because societal components must adjust to achieve stability. When one part of the system was not working or was dysfunctional, it affects all other parts and creates social problems, which leads to social change. This could be equated to the current trend in accessing school.

Functionalism had been critiqued by many sociologists for its neglect of the often negative implications of social order. Some critics, like Italian theorist Antonio Gramsci, claim that the perspective justifies the status quo, and the process of cultural hegemony which maintains it. Functionalism did not encourage people to take an active role in changing their social environment, even when doing so would benefit them. Instead, functionalism sees agitating for social change as undesirable because the various parts of the society compensate in a seemingly natural way for any problems that would arise.

The theory was relevant to the current study in that it could be seen in how County government officials had mobilized the parents and the community on issues to do with participation and enhancing access. There was need to address the risk factors that escalate access problems which would lead to functionality challenges of the society. The learners belong to the community that was expected to achieve to the highest levels.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Parental Expectation and students' Access to Education:

Parental expectations were subjective predictions about the future which originate from and affect people's beliefs, knowledge and experience (Russell, 2003). Also According to Adeniji-Neill (2012), Parental expectations were various beliefs, assumptions, and aspirations that individual holds about an observable fact or incident. Reviewing the work of various writers Adeniji-Neill concludes that expectations normally motivate parents to encourage in their children's learning and predict the learners' successful in school. Russell (2003) further observe that parents develop expectations about their children's education through their own experiences or through information provided by the school, media and other parents. Ultimately, parental expectation was perceived to impact on parents' involvement in their children's education. However, the degree to which parental expectation relate to learners' access to preschool education was not clear.

In USA, Keiningham, Aksoy, Andreassen, and Estrin (2006) conducted a survey study to investigate into the relationship between parent satisfaction and child retention at a childcare centre. The sample size for the study included 1,003 respondents. The study findings revealed that parent satisfaction was positively associated with children's retention when they were very young. As children increase in age, however, the relationship between parent satisfaction and child care retention declined. However, the study did not directly look at the influence of parental expectation on preschoolers' enrolment, retention and transition which the present study seeks to investigate into. Keiningham et al study further differs with the current study in that it involved a big sample size of 1,003 respondents and was carried out in USA a developed nation while the study was carried out in Nyamira County, Kenya a developing nation using a relatively small sample.

A survey on parents' satisfaction with early childhood services was conducted by Teleki and Buck-Gomez (2002). Participants for the study were 65 rural families with a child younger than 5 years of age enrolled in a child care centre. Parents responded to the 20 items of the questionnaire on a 5-point Likert scale. Parents in that study reported moderate to high levels satisfaction with services provided in early childhood programs. The study further indicated that parental

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satisfaction was higher when parents were feeling welcomed at all times and when the teachers were having a good attitude toward the parent and child. Teleki and Buck-Gomez (2002) study was conducted among rural population in USA, given the geographical and cultural differences it was difficult to generalise the results to the whole world. The current study was conducted in both urban and rural setting in Kenya, Nyamira County.

Fantuzzo, Perry and Childs (2006) investigated into the relationship between parental perspective and involvement with their child's early education programs. The study involved 648 parents. Multivariate results revealed that parents with children in kindergarten were more satisfied in all three dimensions of parent satisfaction (which were teacher contact experiences, classroom contact experiences, and school contact experiences) than were parents of children in first grade. They believed that the difference was possibly due more emphasis being placed on parental involvement in classrooms of younger children than classrooms of older children. The study however was quantitative in nature and mainly focused on parental involvement in their child's early education program unlike the present study that adopt mixed approach investigating into three aspects of preschoolers' access to preschool education (transition, enrolment and retention).

In another study, Jang (2008) investigated the relationship between parental perception of the importance of quality education and preschool children's access to early child care programs in Taiwan. Data were collected using a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire from 810 parents of the three to five-year-old children enrolled in one of 20 preschools. Results revealed that there was significant difference between parental perception of importance of quality and satisfaction with child care programs. The difference was on process quality indicators (teacher-child responses, play activities and learning materials). The researcher cautioned that process features would not be easily visible to parents, so it would result in difficulties when attempting to critically perceive actual levels of quality and satisfaction. The study was however comparing parents' satisfaction and their perceived importance of quality education in selected ECDE programmes. The current study on the other hand was focused on the influence of parental factors on preschoolers access to early childhood education.

Longitudinal study was conducted that demonstrated that high quality early childhood programs that contained comprehensive parental involvement components produce positive short and long-term benefits (Muenning, Schweinhart, Montie and Neidell, 2009). These longevity studies demonstrated short-term benefits such as increased academic achievement, lower rates of special educations services, lower rates of grade retention, and lower rates of teenage pregnancy. Long-term benefits included higher high school graduation rates, higher college enrolment, higher incomes and lower incarceration rates and lower rates of public assistance. The study in general demonstrated that positive parental expectation were essential in achieving positive short and long term benefits in high quality ECE programs. Unlike the reviewed study that utilised longitudinal approach, the present study used cross-sectional approach which was perceived to take a shorter period in data correction and analysis.

Zionts et al (2003) also examined the extent to which parental perceptions related to cultural sensitivity in special education programs. The researcher interviewed 24 African American families with children with moderate to severe emotional or cognitive disabilities to explore satisfaction with cross cultural sensitivity within special education systems. The study further used a semi-structured phone interview to collect the data. The major themes that emerged from the study were the lack of positive attitude toward education that impacted on children's access to special education. Further, the study demonstrated that parents were dissatisfied with programs, 64% of parents felt a lack of respect toward them and their children, 50% of parents perceived negativity towards them and their child, and 57% reported no evidence of cross cultural sensitivity. Despite the relevance of the reviewed study to the current study, the study was conducted among parents and children with disability unlike the present study that was conducted in regular preschool centre. The two categories of schools were perceived to differ in terms of developmental challenges and needs.

Through the use of classroom observations, questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, Chan (2012) explored the expectations of kindergarten and primary school parents in light of the transition to primary school in Hong Kong. Preschoolers and first graders were interviewed to gather information about their views of this period of change and parental expectations. Results indicated that the parents of kindergarten were concerned about academic skills and personal qualities for the forthcoming shift which greatly influenced their learning outcomes. There were differences between the students' learning outcomes and adults' expectations mainly in academic skills and self-discipline. Despite the relevance of the reviewed study to the current study, the study used qualitative approach unlike the present study that used

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concurrent triangulation which was perceived to counter the limitation of qualitative and quantitative approach when used alone.

In Finland, Turunen (2012) conducted a study to investigate the factors that were influencing children's transition from early education setting to primary level among children with special needs. The researcher interviewed six educators in order to explore the way in which individual planning was carried out. Perceptions about individual planning were also gathered from eleven parents. Results indicated that parental planning was beneficial during the transition from early education care to preschool. Results further observed that parents felt effectively listened by teachers when they were constantly involved in school activities and parental involvement was necessary for children access to quality education. However, the reviewed study was conducted among children with disabilities using qualitative unlike the present study that was conducted among regular preschool centres using both qualitative and quantitative approach.

In working with kindergarten level, Konerza (2013) assessed the influence of parents on readiness and development of children in order to make the transition to school after the implementation of the "Gearing Up for Kinder Programme" in an American school. Children's literacy skills (letter identification and numeracy) were also assessed by the study. This programme promotes general readiness for school without a particular emphasis on the transition process. The author carried out a pre, post and post-post assessment of 75 parents, divided into a control and an experimental group, by administering the "Practical Parent Assessment of School Readiness survey" which focused on five different developmental domains. Results indicated that parental expectations and involvement positively related to children's access to quality education and readiness. Konerza (2013) study was based on experimental design which manipulates variables to observe their effect. The current study on the other hand was based on concurrent triangulation approach. In addition, Konerza (2013) study tests were given while the current research data was collected using questionnaires and interview schedule.

Bogunovic and Polovina (2007) conducted a study to examine the stimulating aspects of family context that were the most predictable for the development of educational aspirations, i.e. attitudes towards school and gaining knowledge, educational interests and plans for further education among students. The sample consisted of 1,464 eighth-grade sample students, aged 15, from 34 primary schools in Serbia. The data were collected by the use of questionnaires. The study found that the family stimulation was the resultant of the influence of cultural and educational profile of the family and active parental attitudes regarding education and attainment of their children. The results further indicated a trend of interrelatedness of cognitively and educationally favourable conditions within the family and positive attitudes towards school, attainment, high aspirations and cognitive and intellectual interests for out-of-school activities. The study only used qualitative approach using a sample that consisted of 1,464 eighth-grade students, aged 15, from 34 primary schools in Serbia. On the contrary the current study involve both qualitative and quantitative methods and conducted in preschools in Kenya. The study also collect data using interviews and questionnaires

A study by Davis-Kean (2005) added to the research suggesting a link between parent expectations and learning outcomes. Davis-Kean mentioned that parents who expect their child to go college versus parents with lower expectations would create a different environment and connection with their child in order for their child to achieve these expectations. The study further observed that parents with high expectations would have a more cognitively stimulating and emotionally supporting home environment than those with lower expectations hence enrol their child in school. These high expectation parents would also have a more flexible environment to adjust to their child's needs and to foster their child's academic abilities. Davis-Kean (2005) study differs with the current study in that its purpose was to find a link between parent expectations and learning outcomes. The current study on the other hand find parental factors influence on access to Early Childhood Education centres in Masaba North Sub-County, Kenya.

Baroody and Dobbs-Oates (2009) also established that parent's expectations about the level of schooling for their child was related to their child's literacy interest and access to basic education. The study further found that parental expectations of school achievement, such as grades children was significantly related to their child's interest in literacy (Baroody and Dobbs-Oates, 2009). Hence, the study concluded that different parental expectations were related to different learning outcomes. Baroody and Dobbs-Oates (2009) study differs with the current study in that the study investigated into parent's expectations about the level of schooling and their children's access to basic education using

qualitative approach while the study seek to investigate into the relationship between parental factors and access to Early Childhood Education centres in Masaba North Sub-County, Kenya.

Additional research conducted by Martini and Senechal (2012) examined parents' beliefs and expectations about reading, the parent's role in helping their child learn literacy skills, and what their child should know before first grade. This study showed a strong relationship between parents' expectations and child early literacy. However, the study found that if parents hold too high expectations that were unattainable by their children, this created maladaptive consequences for the child thus affect the children access to education. The study only used qualitative approach and was only conducted in urban setting using interviews only contrary to the current study that used both qualitative and quantitative methods using interviews and questionnaires using a sample obtained from urban and rural area.

In conclusion, Barnett (2004) argues that parental expectation and perception was critical for parents of children with and without disabilities as it improves parental involvement, helps students reach their full potential, increases students' academic performance, increases teaching quality, and improves long-term positive outcomes for students including narrowing the achievement gap. Although quality ECE was important, existing research on parental perception of quality ECE programs was limited. Several studies have demonstrated that the ECE programs were not accessible in most parts of the world. However, there were limited studies that have addressed the influence of parental expectation on preschoolers access to preschool education. While Barnett, (2004) study was based on the parental expectation and perception on children with disability the current study on the other hand uncover issues related to parental factors and preschooler's access to preschool.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research design:

This study adopted concurrent triangulation approach. According to Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Tuner, (2007) concurrent triangulation research involves the mixing of different methodological viewpoints. Concurrent triangulation approach is useful when one approach alone is inadequate. The use of both approaches (qualitative and quantitative) was perceived to increase the overall strength of a study and allows for the findings' richness in both depth and width in addressing the research problem (Creswell 2009). With concurrent triangulations, findings were likely to be more trustworthy and relevant than if separate approaches were used (Creswell ,2009). Thus, the method was used for the purpose of triangulation which offsets the weaknesses of single research methods and provides better quality data. Within concurrent triangulation approach, the study in particular used Concurrent Triangulation design that involved the use of both quantitative and qualitative approaches. This design had a single phase-timing hence referred to as the "concurrent triangulation design" (Creswell, 2014). It generally involved the concurrent, but separate, collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data so that the researcher could best understand the research problem. A frame of concurrent triangulation research design was shown in figure 1.3.
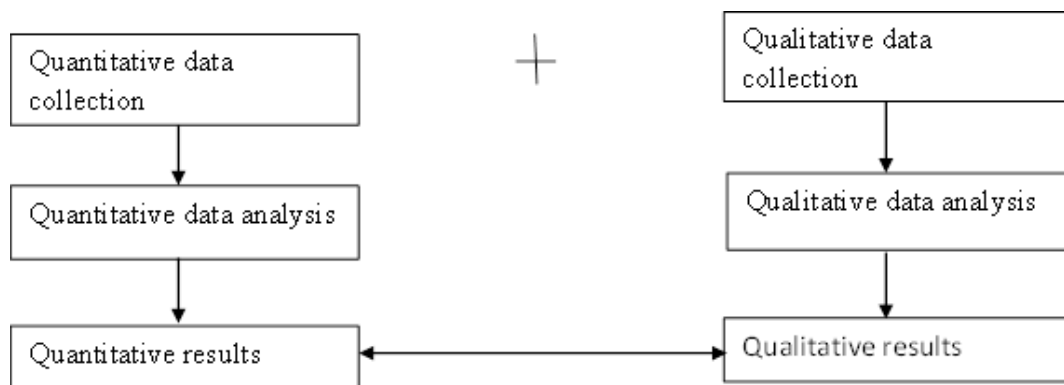

Figure 1.3: Shows a figurative representation of a Concurrent Triangulation Research Design.

Adopted from: The Qualitative Report Volume 17 Number 1 January 2012

The Concurrent Triangulation Research Design had a number of strengths that qualified it to be used in this study. It is an efficient design, in which both types of data were collected during one phase of the research at roughly the same time. Each type of data was collected and analyzed separately and independently using techniques traditionally associated with each data type. This lends itself to team research, in which the team could include individuals with both quantitative and qualitative expertise (Terrell, 2011). However, there were also challenges in using triangulation Research Design. Although this design was the most popular concurrent triangulations design, it was also probably the most challenging of the four major types of designs.

Application of qualitative data helped to explore study as respondents provided their perspectives in words. Quantitative approach was intended to test objective theories by examining the relationship among variables by way of questionnaire with open and closed ended questions (Mcleod, 2008). Generally research designs allows for generation of accurate description of a phenomenon (Gall and Borg, 2007).

3.2 Study area:

The study was carried out in Masaba North Sub-County of Nyamira County. Masaba North Sub-County was the second largest Sub-County in Nyamira with an area of 248.3 kilometres square. The population density of Masaba North Sub-County was 296 people per square kilometre. According to the Commission on Revenue Allocation (CRA), (2009) Masaba North Sub-County had a poverty index of 48.6. This was an indication that many people were poor. The predominant economic activity around Masaba North Sub-County was small scale and subsistence farming. Studies also indicate that the dropout and repetition rates especially in lower primary were high, some children do not take the three year preschool learning period required by government and other children join standard one without going through preschool education in Masaba North Sub-County of Nyamira County. Also given that most residents were poor and depend on casual work, small business and hawking to support their families, they use most of their time outside their family circle leaving their children with little or no support and supervision. It was against this background information that Masaba North Sub-County of Nyamira County was selected for this study that lies 34.48^0E to 35.80^0E and 0.29^0S to1^0S.

3.3 Target Population:

Target population refers to a group of individuals who have some common characteristics that are of interest to the researcher (Kahn and Best, 2006). Mugenda and Mugenda (2005) define target population as a set of events, people or objects to which the researcher wishes to generalize the results of the research. The target population of this study consists of 71 pre-primary head teachers, 142 pre-primary teachers and 763 parents. There were four divisions namely Girango, Bocharia, Gesima and Mochenwa. The target population for the study was summarized as shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Target Population

Divisions	No. of public preschools Schools	No. of Primary Head teachers	No. of preschool Teachers	No. of parents
Girango	21	21	42	200
Bocharia	16	16	32	204
Gesima	13	13	26	114
Mochenwa	21	21	42	245
Total	**71**	**71**	**142**	**763**

Source: researcher, 2017

3.4 Sampling Techniques and Sample size:

3.4.1 Sampling Techniques:

Sampling is a process of selecting just a small group of people as representatives from a large group called the population (Nicholas, 2006). While, a sample is a smaller and more accessible subset of the population that adequately represents the overall group, thus enabling one to give an accurate picture of the population as a whole, with respect to the particular

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aspects of interest to the study (UNESCO, 2005). The current study employed cluster, purposive and simple random sampling design. The schools were selected using cluster sampling design. Cluster random sampling was used to select schools from the four geographical divisions. Oso and Onen (2009) argued that the important thing about cluster sampling strategy was that clusters or geographical areas were given equal chances of being selected. For this reason all the ECDE centres in the Masaba North Sub-County were divided into four clusters and then random sampling procedure were done in every division. Cluster sampling ensured that all the geographic divisions were equally represented in the sample hence raising the external validity that was the ability to generalize the study results beyond the study sample.

According to Patton (1990), purposeful sampling refers to a procedure in a study whereby informants are selected because of some characteristic. Purposive sampling technique was also used to select head teachers and preschool lead teachers. The researcher used purposive sampling so as to include all the head teachers and preschool lead teachers in the sampled ECDE centres. Oso and Onen (2009) assert that purposive sampling depends on a decision by the researcher.

On the other hand, simple random sampling procedure was used to sample parents from sampled schools. Mugenda and Mugenda, (2005) described simple random sampling procedure as a fair way of selecting a sample from a given target population since every member was given equal opportunities of being selected. For the reasons indicated, the researcher used random sampling so as to give equal chance to all ECDE lead teachers to be included in the study. Saturated sampling was used by the researcher to select Sub-County Education officer. Saturated sampling was suitable for the study because when the target population was small (Sharma, 2008).

3.4.2 Sample Size:

Sampling is a process of selecting just a small group of people as representatives from a large group called the population (Nicholas, 2006). Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) suggest that it's adequate to consider 10% to 30% of the target population in any given study. This informed the researcher's decision to select 10% of the 763 parents, 30% of 71 of the head teachers and 30% of 142 ECDE Lead was 76, 21 and 43 respectively. Using simple random sampling technique for parents and purposive sampling for ECDE lead teachers. According to Patton (1990), purposeful sampling refers to a procedure in qualitative study whereby informants are selected because of some characteristic. In this regard, only ECE lead teachers were key informants thus leaving out the regular teachers.

Saturated sampling was used by the researcher to select Sub-County Education officer. Saturated sampling was suitable for a study since the target population was small (Sharma, 2008). It's on this basis that the researcher used one Sub-County Education Officer. The sample size for this study was summarized on Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 Target population and Sample Size

Category of Respondents	Population	Sample size	Percentage
ECDE Schools	71	21	30%
Head teachers	71	21	30%
ECDE Lead Teachers	142	43	30%
Sub-County Education officer	1	1	100%
Parents	763	76	10%
TOTAL	1048	161	15.36%

Source: Researcher, 2017

3.5 Research Instruments:

The research instruments consisted were: Questionnaire, interview schedules and document analyses. The selection of these tools was guided by the nature of the data collected, time available, as well as the objectives of the study. The Questionnaire and interview schedules were appropriate for collecting the data.

3.5.1 Questionnaires for parents:

The questionnaires were considered as ideal in collecting data from parents as respondents. According to Borg and Gall (1983) questionnaires are the most efficient way of reaching many respondents in the shortest time possible. The respondents were free to express their feelings and opinions about phenomena using questionnaires. Both open-ended and

closed-ended questionnaires were used in this study. These questionnaires were divided in five parts: the first part was concerned with the general information of the respondents while the other four part contain detailed items related to the research questions. The questionnaires contained items meant to elicit information on the general view of parental determinants and preschoolers' access to preschool education. The questionnaire was further ideal for the study since the respondents were more confident in giving responses without the fear of being known since they were not required to give their names.

3.5.2 Questionnaires for lead teachers:

The questionnaires are research instruments consisting of a series of questions and other prompts for the purpose of gathering information from respondents. In questionnaires questions may be designed to gather either quantitative or qualitative data. By their nature, quantitative questions are more exact than qualitative according to Borg and Gall (1983). This research used questionnaires to collect data from the lead teachers of the respective schools in the sample. These questionnaires were divided in five parts: the first part was concerned with the general information of lead teachers (respondents) while the other four part contain detailed items related to the research questions. The questionnaires contained items meant to elicit information on the respondents' general view of parental determinants for preschoolers' access to preschool education. When it is necessary to protect the privacy of the participants, questionnaires are easy to administer confidentiality. Often confidentially is needed to ensure participants respond honestly. It also saves time and the cost of administration per person of a questionnaire is minimal. To ensure this confidentiality, the researcher administered and collected the questionnaires personally.

3.5.3 Interview schedules for primary school head teachers:

Interviews were one of the most common methods of data collection in concurrent triangulation especially when handling qualitative approaches (Andrew and Halcomb, 2009). The study employed unstructured and semi-structured interviews. Interviews were conducted to primary school head teachers. Interview schedules took an average of one hour. The interviews were aimed at gathering the respondents' views on how parental factors relates preschoolers' access to preschool education. Interview schedules were suitable for this study because they allowed the researcher to obtain information that cannot be directly observed and to gain control over the line of questioning (Oso and Onen, 2011). The interviews were conducted by the researcher in each head teacher's school in the sample size. The researcher used a smart phone to record the conversation and thereafter wrote down the findings in a note book. All the interviews were audio-taped and transcribed verbatim for analysis by the researcher to allow for immersion in the data and to maintain coherence and connections in the content (Oso and Onen, 2011).

It was important that the participants completely comprehend the nature of the questions. They were given humble time to think and answer the interview questions. To be consistent with all the participants the researcher asked the same set of guide questions, so that the same areas were covered with each participant (Thomas, 2012). However, the researcher changed the order or the wordings of the questions to obtain a deeper reflection. All guide questions were open-ended and encouraged reflection and descriptions of beliefs, observations and understanding of the effective participants.

3.5.4 Interview schedules for sub-county education officer:

The main types of qualitative research method is interviews (Cohen, Mannion and Morrison, 2011). Given the aims of the research, interview was selected as the method of data collection for this research. Individual (sub-county education officer) in-depth interview was chosen. Also, given the range of topics which the interview aimed to cover, it was decided that the research aims could best be addressed in a one-to-one interview context (Joffe and Yardley, 2004).

Research interviews span a continuum from highly structured to unstructured. In unstructured interviews, the interaction is participant-driven and the direction taken is led by the interviewee. In structured interviews, a set of predetermined questions are asked by the researcher in a predetermined order, with little or no deviation from the set question list. The present study utilized a semi-structured interview format. In semi-structured interviews, the researcher approaches the interview with a set of topics and questions which are to be covered during the interview. However, the interviewer also has discretion over the order in which the questions are asked, and is also free to probe for further information when necessary. Such an approach also allows the interview to follow trajectories which appear important to the interviewee and may not have been covered in the designed interview protocol (Thomas, 2012). Given that, in this case, the researcher had

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a number of predetermined topics which needed to be covered yet had awareness that the study was exploratory in nature and as such, there should be an element of freedom in the interviews, a semi-structured approach was selected as the best fit for this phase of the research. It was decided that face-to-face interviews be conducted which took around one hour of interview, as these had a number of advantages over alternative methods such as telephone or online interviews. While telephone interviews have practical attractions such as reducing travel time and cost, concerns have been raised in the literature as to the implications for the development of rapport between interviewer and interviewee when interviews are not conducted face-to-face, and the loss of non-verbal information such as gestures which can aid communication. Given these concerns, face-to-face interviews were chosen over distance interviewing methods.

3.6 Data Collection Procedures:

The researcher obtain an authorization letter from the Board of Post Graduate Studies of Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology and then obtain a permit from the National Commission of Science, Technology and Innovation. Kombo and Tromp (2006), maintain that researchers must justify beyond any reasonable doubt the need for data collection. Therefore, the researcher sent introductory letters to all respondents and informants. Before the collection of any data from the sample, an authorization letter was sought from the County Commissioner and the Director of Education Nyamira County and District Education Officer Masaba North Sub-County to carry out the study in the preschools. Respondents was informed on the importance of the study and was assured verbally of confidential treatment of information provided. Appointments were booked in person so as to give the respondents a hint on what the study expected of them.

Collection of qualitative and quantitative data was done, a sequential mixed method was used. Relevant qualitative and quantitative data were used to obtain information. Questionnaire was generated based on relevant perceived parental factors and access to preschool in quantitative data collection. Thereafter, questionnaires were administered to each of the participants by the researcher to complete by filling the option considered most appropriate to the request being demanded. The collected questionnaires were read before the respondents so as to ensure the accuracy of the information provided by the respondents and effect necessary corrections. This prevented the data from missing. After the collecting the questionnaires, the researcher ensured that all the booklets of the participants were checked so that no one was left out.

Data for qualitative research are mostly obtained from field contact with participants (Creswell, 2012). Patton (2002) identifies three kinds of qualitative data: interviews, observations, and documents. This study employed interviews as the main sources of data. This section thus presents the participants and how they were sampled, the nature of interview questions used, and how the interviews were conducted. Interview method was used to allow collection of detailed information from the head teachers about parental factors that determine pupils' access to ECE, nine head teachers were selected from nine schools used in the current study. Interview is a verbal conversation between two people with the objective of collecting relevant information for the purpose of research (Bailey, Hennink and Hutter, 2011). It allows respondents to speak out their opinions, feelings, beliefs, insights, attitudes and experiences about a problem in question through the use of probing questions.

The purpose of the interviews was to obtain description of the lived world of the interviewees with respect to the interpretations of the meaning of the described problem (Kvale, 2009). With semi-structured interview method, it was possible to ask follow-up questions to in order to get richer information. Informants were available to clarify immediate concerns and unclear statements (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2007). Also through the establishment of trust and rapport with the informants, a researcher is likely to get more information by using semi- structure interview compared to other methods of data collection. Therefore interactions were made possible before the interview session to build trust and rapport with the informants. An interview was carried out with every head teacher selected to participate in the study. The time arranged for an interview was approximately 40 minutes for every head teacher. The interview questions were formulated on the basis of the main research questions and sub-questions.

After getting permission from all nine informants, an audio-tape recorder was used in order to maintain the original data. The audio recording provides a complete verbal record, it can be studied much more thoroughly, and it speeds up the interview process (Gall, Gall and Borg, 2007). Audio recording was especially important because the interviews were mixed with Swahili language and I had to translate them into English.

3.7 Data Analysis:

Data was analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively.

3.7.1 Quantitative data analysis:

Data from questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics by the help of SPSS version 23.0. Wolverto (2009) describes descriptive statistics as one that involves the process of computing a mass of raw data into tables, charts, with frequency distribution and percentages.

Table 3.3 Quantitative Data Analysis Matrix

Objectives	Data collection instruments /Items/ Variables	Method of Analysis
To find out how the parental social - economic status affect preschoolers' access to early childhood education.	Questionnaires, interviews and document analysis. IV- parental economic status/ DV- enrolment	Frequency counts, percentages and regression analysis
To examine the relationship between parental engagement and preschoolers' access to early childhood education.	Questionnaires, interviews and document analysis. IV- Parental engagement /DV- Transition and retention	Frequency counts and percentages and Pearson Correlation
To determine how the parental expectation from early childhood education affected preschoolers' access to early childhood education.	Questionnaires, interviews and document analysis. IV- Parental expectation/ DV- Enrolment, Transition and retention	Frequency counts, percentages and Pearson Correlation
To establish the relationship between parental attitude towards early childhood education and preschoolers' access to Early Childhood education.	Questionnaires, interviews and document analysis. IV-Parental attitude/ DV- Access to preschool education	Frequency counts and percentages and regression analysis

Source: researcher, 2017

3.7.2 Qualitative data analysis:

Data analysis is the process of organizing the data collected for example into categories to produce meaningful information (Kothari, 2008). Data analysis is important for interpreting these raw data, in order to obtain the meaning and pattern from data (Bell, 2005). Therefore, data analysis in qualitative studies should begin immediately after the first data collection process to discover if there is any information that is necessary or missing.

Analysis of qualitative data, according to Flick (2014), is the interpretation and classification of linguistic material with the aim of making statements about implicit and explicit dimensions and structures of meaning making in the material and what is represented in it. In this study the preliminary data analysis was done after every interview to check if there was any information necessary for the study that was missing. When the process of data collection was over, the raw data were transcribed. Transcription is the process of transforming interview notes and audio recording into texts (Johnson and Christiansen, 2012).

The data collected were transcribed. Afterwards, thematic analysis was used to organize the transcribed data. Thematic organization and analysis is the process that identifies analyses and reports the occurrence of themes in the data collected from the research areas. The study followed the principles of thematic analysis as proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). According to Braun and Clarke (2006) thematic analysis is a method for identifying and analyzing patterns (themes) contained by data. It simply organizes and describes data set in details. Furthermore, thematic analysis interprets various aspects of research. Thematic analysis was appropriate for this study because it was not grounded in any particular theoretical framework and could hence be applied across a broad range of qualitative approaches, making it flexible. In

carrying out thematic analysis to ensure rigor in data analysis, the study followed six basic steps according to Braun & Clarke (2006), thematic analysis procedure is as presented in table 3.4.

Table 3.4: Phases of thematic analysis

Phase	Description of process
1.Familiarising yourself with data	Transcribing data by reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2.Generalizing initial codes	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
3.Searching for themes	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4.Reviewing themes	Checking if themes work in relation to coded extracts and the entire data set (level 2) generating a thematic map of the analysis.
5.Defining and naming themes	Ongoing analysis to refine the specific of each theme, and overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6.Producing the report	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back the analysis to the research question and literature, producing scholarly report of the analysis.

Adopted from Braun and Clarke (2006)

The interview and observation of each participant were checked and presented in relation to the research questions. In reporting the information collected, some direct quotations were used. Reporting direct statements from research participants is important, because it helps to maintain the originality of data collected (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, (2007). Also, researchers' views based on the informants' answers were given backed up by literatures reviewed.

3.8 Ethical Considerations:

Ethical consideration is part of the research works, and cannot be avoided (Bryman, 2004). Therefore, the present study was exempt from full ethical review, given that it involved consulting professionals about aspects of their work lives. Notwithstanding this exemption, ethical guidelines and legal rules should be considered by the researcher (Holloway, 1997). Therefore, according to also Bailey, Hennink and Hutter (2011), ethical issues considerations for informants were ensured for their protection from harm, exposure and anonymity where the participants were presented with an information sheet which outlined the aims of the study and described what participation would entail. Participants were informed of the confidentiality which their data would be treated with, and of their right to withdraw from the study at any time if they so wished.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Parents' Expectation and Access to Preschool Education: Parent:

This section evaluates parental expectations as determinant factor for preschoolers' to access ECDE effectively. Table 4.14 presents the detailed results.

Table 4.1: Parental Expectation

Parental Expectation	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
I expect the school to notify me if my child has a problem.	76	3.71	.935
I assume my child is doing all right when I don't hear anything from the school.	76	4.37	4.746
My child's learning is mainly up to the teacher and my children.	76	3.64	3.614
Preschool education helps my child to develop social skills.	76	3.39	1.132

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My child should be able to read and write by the end of preschool programme.	76	3.93	.929
My child should be taught by qualified teachers.	76	3.57	1.204
Education/schooling is not an indispensable part of life.	76	3.11	1.184
Parents should encourage their children to study well.	76	3.70	.938
I will not face any real problem in future if I did not send my child to school.	76	2.14	1.219
How my child performs in class is important to me.	76	3.68	1.098
When my child grows up to be an adult, it hardly matters if he attended school or not.	76	2.51	1.205
Valid N (listwise)	76	3.43	1.655

Source: Field data, 2017

Table 4.1 discloses that parents gave low expectations and regards 3.43 (Std. Deviation 1.655) (close to low), meaning that most of parents were undecided about the presence of opportunities for preschooler access to ECDE effectively resulting from their expectations towards education and transition. Moderate approval 3.39 was given only to the statements; Preschool education helps children to develop social skills, which shows that almost half of parents were undecided with that. Low approval rating was given to all the remaining statements with lowest approval rating 2.14, to the statement that parents will not face any real problem in future if they do not send their children to school. The mean of 4.37, 3.71, 3.64, 3.68, 3.70, 3.57 and 3.93 is an indication that most parents agree with expectations that their children are doing all right when they don't hear anything from the school, that parents expect the school to notify them if their children has a problem, that children's learning is mainly up to the teacher and the children, How children performs in class is important to parents, Parents should encourage their children to study well, children should be taught by qualified teachers and a child should be able to read and write by the end of preschool programme respectively. These results indicate that parents in general agree to the fact that their children have the opportunity to freely and easily access school. Table 4.14 presents the detail results.

To get the overall picture of how parents rated the level of their expectations from preschool education, the rating of parents' expectation (sub-variables in table 4.1) for each parent (respondent) was aggregated into one index "Expectation" where they were ranked and categorized into "low expectation" and "high expectation". Descriptive statistics on it, as against the accessibility to preschool by children is shown in table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Parents Level of Expectation Index and Accessibility to preschool

Category	Accessibility to preschool				
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
Low expectation	18.3%	30.0%	17.5%	4.2%	70.0%
High expectation	0.8%	5.0%	14.2%	10.0%	30.0%
Total	19.2%	35.0%	31.7%	14.2%	100.0%

Source: Field data, 2017

Table 4.2 gives an indication that the greater percentage of parents had little expectation (70%) while few of them reaching a higher level of expectation (30%) from preschool education. Moreover, out of the 14.2% of the respondents that agreed that expectation matter the accessibility to ECE had high expectation, 10% were parents with higher strongly agreed to had high expectation and the remaining 4.2% were parents who strongly agreed to have low expectation from preschoolers' education. On the other hand, majority of the parents who strongly disagreed had 19.2% were parent who strongly disagreed had low expectations (18.3%).

To identify whether the level of expectation of parents have a relationship with pupils' accessibility to preschool, the two numerical indexes (Expectation and Accessibility to preschool) were correlated using Pearson's moment correlation co-efficient as illustrated in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Pearson Product Moment Correlation for Parents' Expectation level and children's Accessibility to preschool

		Children's Accessibility to preschool	Parents' Expectation level
Children's Accessibility to preschool	Pearson Correlation	1	582*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		000
	N	76	76
Parents' Expectation Level	Pearson Correlation	582**	1
	Sig. (2-tailled)	000	
	N	76	76

Source: Researcher, 2017.

According to Table 4.3, the Pearson correlation index obtained was 582 (r = 582) being positive. This suggested a positive correlation, which implies that pupils' accessibility to preschool rose with parents' expectation level. Its significance p-value was 0.000 which was less than 0.01 (P < 0.01) indicating a level of significance. This implies that preschoolers' accessibility to school was significantly related to parent's level of expectation.

Participants interviewed revealed that the parental expectation from education from the study offered aspects regarding the purpose of education according to what most parents expected from education. First, having opportunities is extremely important for the participants of this study, and according to them, education is a means to have access to various opportunities to be successful in life. The world is open to those individuals who are educated, and they are able to achieve whatever they want from their lives. Secondly, having independence to choose a lifestyle of their liking is also immensely important to participants of this study. The independence aspect includes freedom to choose lifestyle, having financial stability, and having multiple professional and personal options to choose from. Both of these aspects were discussed in the literature review and were expected findings. Participants insisted that education should provide opportunities for children to become independent.

The third aspect that was revealed as a purpose of education for participants was personal growth. Education as an instrument to better child's future and to achieve life skills; this finding is not surprising at all because the literature reviewed for this study revealed that the parent concept known as Confucianism basically means to constantly work to improve oneself and to achieve diligence and concentration. The literature review also revealed that education as a means of self-improvement. In addition, at least four participants mentioned the role of their religion in getting education. Thus, it can be concluded that education is considered as an instrument to not only become a better person but also to become a better religious person.

Next, respect and high social status have great value in the communities; education provides respect. Many times s refer to a person by their degrees and their professions such as "Mr. Ken the physician" or "Ms. Ken the doctorate." Thus, education becomes extremely crucial for individuals. Lastly, it was revealed that a life without education as an unsuccessful life that will have no opportunities, no financial stability, no respect, and life will have no meaning. The only way to succeed in life is by achieving education according to the participants of this study. The negative consequences of not getting sufficient education were also discussed in the literature review of this study and were an expected finding. But those all expectation from education was in majority parents.

Teachers welcome visits from parents when parents were informed of any problems concerning their children's academic progress as well as the parents' duties and roles that the school expected of them. A head teacher at school C explained:

We try to guide them because most are ignorant and we show them the importance of education so as to impart it to their children.(C1)

Although parents visited the school as often as the need arose, teachers specifically wanted to meet parents whose children had problems. These parents, however were the most difficult to meet. A teacher in school B observed:

We actually like them to come but some factors such as their jobs keep them off.(B1)

The head teacher at school H revealed that some parents had high expectations that learning of their children was up to teachers and school. They (Parent) never even followed their children's progress at school. According to H1:

Some parents expected the teachers and the school to solve their children's home based problems, since they were not coming to school when called to discuss maybe the problems they face, where even they don't necessary learning materials. This is because they see teachers as baby-sitters for their children. So we become the teacher and the parent to the child.(H1)

Although most head teachers felt parents should assist their children at home, parents did not always feel confident about how to help their children in learning activities in the home. As Strauss and Burger (2000) point out it is illiteracy that hinders them from carrying out this role at home. A teacher from school F observed, "We are dealing with a community that is not educated. Those illiterate ones would not like to participate in helping their children with homework." Another teacher from school E felt that ignorance caused parents to feel that they did not want to be engaged even when they were educated:

We, as teachers, try to involve them as much as possible but most of them are not concerned. Quite a good number do not care what the child is doing at school. If you send the child home there are those who will tell you they don't even know the position of the child in the last examination. Then there are those who do not know when their child misses coming to school.(E1)

Furthermore, some parents did not feel they were able to cope with the level of difficulty of some of the preschool work, particularly in pronouncing alphabets. Teachers felt that such parents did not help their children with homework because they did not want to expose their ignorance in some subjects to their children. Therefore, they gave little help at home. McGrath (2007:1401) concurs with these findings observing that in interactions between teachers and the parents, the parents depended on the school to provide them with information about their children's academic progress, which would bolster their good expectation from the school, making them feel connected to their children's experience.

The participant P expressed favourable attitudes parents have towards involvement in education. The strongest endorsement of parental engagement, perhaps unsurprisingly, came from the home-school activities participation and communication. He described his job thus:

The purpose of this job is to create a partnership between home and school community; and particularly to strengthen the link between home and school. So I suppose, at the core of it is the children's education. And the aim of the job is to bring parents closer to their children's education. So that's a very noble aim, I think. (P)

He acknowledged the important role he felt that parents should have in the educational lives of their preschooler: 'Parents are the prime of educating their children.' (Participant P). Also participant P reported high levels of (school-based) parental involvement in his school and high expectations from the outcomes of ECE, and attitude that education matter and had a range of benefits for children's outcomes and transition. He was keen to highlight that while some of these outcomes may not be easily measured or assessed, they were nonetheless very important:

I think there's benefits of parental engagement for both the school and for the children… I think for the parents to feel part of their children's preschool education, they feel that they're respected and valued and that their knowledge and expertise and skills are valued, really, and respected… The children will feel more secure. It will deepen their appreciation of education, without them even knowing it… I think all the research shows that the higher parental involvement, the higher positive attitude and expectation, the greater the preschoolers have the chance of accessing education and the greater the outcomes for children. In all kinds of ways. There's a lot of outcomes though… I think at the moment we're very focused on quantitative outcomes in everything we do. And I'm not such a person. I'm sure there's statistics that back up everything, but I think the qualitative outcomes are more important. And they're less obvious sometimes. And there are qualitative outcomes here. You know, you see that the children are more secure. You see that they, they seem to flourish I suppose. Education becomes bigger than school. It becomes more than what lessons you have or what you're learning. It's kind of like a lifelong journey really, that's the way I see it anyway. It's a life journey. So you're preparing for that engagement with learning and knowledge throughout their lives. (P)

Thus, participant P presents what appears to be an empowerment view of parental involvement, highlighting his experience that it provides subtle but significant benefits for child, parent and school. For example: 'I think it's very important and well, mostly I'd say it's very positive, engagement.' (Participant P). However, such general evaluations may point to a need for teachers to consider this question more deeply in the future, particularly in light of the experience of Home-School coordination. It should be noted that, in reporting generally favourable attitudes towards 'parental engagement', the respondent here did not place equal value on all parental participation practices. The importance, or lack thereof, placed by Sub-County Education Officers on different aspects of parental engagement is now considered.

Head teachers from all schools mentioned the importance of parent-teacher meetings. There were both formal and informal contacts that were usually based on the needs of the school, teachers or the parents. In all the schools observed, annual general meetings with the parents of each class were conducted once each term. These annual events were mainly held to inform parents of their children's progress and to address problems that the children may have been having at school. Parents were also informed about school levies that required to be paid. These meetings aimed at improving parent-teacher relationships. The head teacher of school H explained:

"Parents are supposed to come discuss issues encountered in their children's classes."

The head teacher of school F clarified:

We normally have parents of a class, for example, nursery class, come on their meeting day and talk with the teacher and when need arises we call the individual parents to come to school and talk to them about issues pertaining their children and what is expected of them.

A teacher from school B explained that they mostly contacted parents at the opening of the school year or "when we need to see them about a problem or something and when you have done an examination to discuss the results with them and in case of indiscipline and you want to speak with the parent." There were more informal contacts between teachers and parents than formal meetings. When teachers were asked how often they contact parents, the general response was when there was a problem. Only in schools A, F and B did parents come to see the teachers of their children on their own when there was a problem. One father from school G was keen to follow his child's progress in school and explained: "I follow very much my son's progress. I follow if my child was given homework I check and if they did an exam, I take the report form and check. Or if he does well I come and follow up with the teacher in school."

However, teachers and parents viewed these contacts differently. Parents appreciated the opportunity these meetings gave them to know their children's academic progress at school.

Teachers at Schools B, C, D and E observed that parent-teacher meetings were poorly attended:

Not very much unless we have annual general meetings they are called but us here we don't involve them much because it sometimes creates more problems instead of solving problems. And when you call 50 parents in a class, 10 only will appear for such meetings. Moreover, only one of the spouses attended the parent-teacher meetings, not both.

For this, schools were willing to arrange a convenient time to meet parents for better attendance. The head teacher of school H expressed his frustration with parents:

Here if you call parents to come at 11.00 a.m. some will come drunk. So, we normally call them at 7.00 a.m. and finish at 8.00 to 9.00 a.m. We have made them used to come early when they are sober.

The head teacher of school A explained:

Because our children come from poor homes whose parents are wage earners, we don't call meetings at market days, we give long notices and take the shortest time during meetings to give parents who are wage earners time to attend to their jobs. A parent who asked permission from his employer to come to school will certainly not concentrate in the meeting at all, and will go away even before it ends. Sometimes we call meetings in the afternoons when parents are through with their jobs.

Head teacher from school B added:

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We make sure we take the shortest time possible to release those who want to go. So, we ensure not more than two hours if it is an academic clinic and then we release them to go to their work.

Even when teachers requested parents to come to school whenever they found it necessary to talk with them, head teachers felt that:

It is as if they do not see the need to come to school. I feel it is because of the standard of living of the parents. They are so busy. They think that education is second to whatever they are doing, other things come first and feel that education is for the teachers so they will come here to discuss education only when teachers call them. (H1)

Furthermore, teachers observed that those parents whose children had the most problems were frequently called to school to be informed about their children's conduct, yet such parents were the very ones who are not committed come to school and who seldom attended meetings because they have low attitude towards education and feel that it does no matter whether they take their child to school or not it will not affect they future or learn is upon the teacher and the child only. The teacher in school B added:

"Yet if there is a problem with education they are all too ready to come and complain."

It was found that there were both formal and informal parent-teacher meetings. However, teachers often called parents only when they had problems to sort out. Parents, on the other hand, visited the school only when there were issues with which they had to deal with. While both appreciated parent-teacher meetings, the teachers' responses indicated that when parents were invited to these events or meetings few attended. Even when such occasions provided opportunities to the parents for communication and problem solving, apparently, many parents expected the school to handle the issue alone. Although schools attempted to encourage attendance by providing flexibility to the parents, the low turn-up by parents showed that most of them saw little engagement in these meetings.

Bronfenbrenner (1979) observes that school's good intentions may not work out well if communication with parents in the society is only in connection with problems. Nermeen, El Nokali, Bachman and Votruba-Drzal (2010:23) advice that teachers need to set up a structure of positive communication in order to lay the foundation for good interactions if they need parents to help them solve academic or behavioural problems to enhance the education access, retention and transition of children.

While most schools essentially applied the ecological model, some attempts to involve parents were found at these schools. Schools required the parents to buy uniforms, shoes, pens and notebooks for their children. They also engaged parents in fundraising through levies to cater for trips, repairs, prizes for motivating pupils at the end of final examinations, paying water bills and paying subordinate staff because funds from the government under the Free Primary Education (FPE) system were inadequate and irregular. In deciding the levies that parents had to pay, the School Management Committee discussed the amounts agreed upon for the parents' body to pay with the parents. The school then notified the District Education Office (DEO) who then authorized the school to ask the parents to pay the levies. Asked in what ways parents assisted schools, a teacher in school F explained:

One, financial contributions parents do something to pay for exams, watchman, secretary, grounds man. Parents pay for that. The FPE does not pay for that. Besides FPE funds depend on the number of pupils, if small you get little and the funds are never enough. We agree with the parents that now that FPE money is this much we should contribute this much. We also motivate their children by buying some utensils (as prizes) from parents' contribution.(F1)

Many schools, however, complain that parents were reluctant or did not want to assist. A head teacher of school G expressed the feeling of many teachers:

There are times we don't have enough exercise books or pencils. A child does not come to school because of a pencil costing 10 shillings or exercise books, which we used to buy before extremely comfortably. You feel they have left the burden to the school, even uniform, some don't buy so I see it is like everything to them the government should do for them. The old commitment has eroded away, but there are those who are concerned. But I think there has been that change of attitude towards education by parents.(G1)

In schools C and F, the head teachers felt parents were willing to help. Although most parents were poor, the school provided for alternative contributions by parents to supplement government funding. A long serving head teacher from school F explained:

When they can't give money to do some jobs in the school they come to help do it. Like we had fencing to do at one time and parents really participated in that project putting up the fence… physically digging and putting up the fence.

In school, C the head teacher explained:

Parents donate maize and beans to cook for the children. We mix and then cook for them to discourage absenteeism in school, to cover the economic problems that same parents are financially stable.

The parental involvement in preschoolers' education activities, participant P indicated that there were high levels of such involvement from parents, specifying as an example an English programme he had organized for parents and children in the most schools which incorporates art/craft and literacy activities, which he entitled the 'Bright Future Project' and was aimed at encouraging reading and positive attitudes towards books and reading. He also indicated that the school was involved in the 'Maths for Fun' programme, which is a paired Maths programme for parents and children in the early years of education implemented in preschools. He believed that this was a very positive way for parents to be involved:

I think parents love to see their parents in the school. They get a kick out of that themselves and you can see them kind of light up. They might say to you: "My mammy's coming in today". And you know, if mammy doesn't turn up, for the class or whatever Maths for Fun is another thing we're doing they feel disappointed, you know. They like it. I think it creates good continuity between home and school engagement. (P)

Head teacher of school (A) too described why he believed this to be important for parents' interest for their child to develop the second language skills (English) in preparation for literacy:

Reading with them, reading to them. You know, discussing the stories with them, the characters, because to develop language at this stage is hugely important before they start to read, so, it helps comprehension… You know, that it's hugely important what you do with your child and that they see you reading. Not even just reading to them but that they actually see that you're interested in something. (A1)

Participant (E1) acknowledged that while parents feel worry about their ability to support their children's education if they lack English language proficiency the preschoolers are taught, he herself saw this as largely a baseless concern, as it is not something that head teachers are anxious about:

It's definitely a worry for parents. We, on this side of the fence as I suppose, don't see it as an obstacle. But I always say to parents, there are… there are three questions when they go to the school first. First of all: "Do you have a place for my child?" Second: "How can I help them with their homework?", and the third is "Where are they going to go to upper classes primary school?" You know, those three questions always come up in my first meetings with parents. And the homework really isn't an issue. Because the children understand what they have to do. (E1)

This Sub-County Education Officer indicates that the worry parents have about this issue before the child starts in school tends to evaporate in practice. However, it may be that it is allayed in the early years, when children do not have any/much homework, and returns later, since some parents express concern about this issue, which may remain more silent for parents than teachers. In this regard it is interesting to note that, when asked whether he believed low parental proficiency in ECDE could result in barriers to the home-based involvement of parents, participant P admitted that it had never occurred to his that this could be the case:

No, now I've never heard that mentioned… It's an interesting question… An obstacle? No, I don't think so. (P)

However, this was in the school that made most outreach efforts to parents to take part in school-based activities, many of which were mainly through English, as their proficiency levels were so low. Another teacher recognized that parental proficiency in ECDE would be a bonus, but not something that was expected:

The ideal would be that there would be more fluent [parents]*, but sure, we have to live with reality.* (P)

However, others reflected that it might be low parental confidence in their ECDE skills that deters the 'hard to reach' parents from wanting to get involved in school life.

The findings indicated that fundraising was the traditional way in which parents were engaged in most schools (Republic of Kenya, 2004a:96-99). With free primary education, parental engagement in fundraising were limited to certain specific activities, which had to be funded by parents when the government disbursements were inadequate. Although parents did not pay fees, they were encouraged to have a good attitude and engagement towards contributing funds in support of activities such as pupils' trips and to pay for other expenses that the FPE funds could not meet. Some schools allowed parents to do physical work such as fixing a fence as part of voluntary work. Formal levies differed according to the requirements in each school. Most parents, however, were reluctant to assist, thinking that the government should pay for everything and they only should take their children to school. Nevertheless, that should not be the case as the government provided teaching and learning materials (Kenya National Commission for UNESCO, 2005:278). Parents, on the other hand, were ready to support schools, but there was no structure for doing this.

5. CONCLUSSION, RECOMMENDATION AND SUGGESTION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

5.1 Conclusion on Parental expectation of early childhood education on Pre-schoolers access to early childhood education in Kenya:

Parental expectation of theier children on Early Childhood Education created differences in children's accessibility to preschool. This was evident in the findings that there is a strong positive significant relationship of r=0.582. This means that children's access to education improves with the improvement of parents' expectations from preschools in the Masaba North Sub-County in Kenya.

5.2 Recommendations on Parental expectation of early childhood education on preschoolers access to early childhood education in Kenya:

It is necessary for parents and teachers to maintain a warm and cordial relationship. Similarly the expectations of parents on their children early childhood education needs to be nurtured as this will enhance parents' easy approach to the teachers to aid in addressing academic progress and disciplinary problems of the children. When all this is attained parents will have fruitful expectations from education thus encouraging their children not to miss in attending classes.

5.3 Suggestion for Future Research:

A study on a larger sized sample for preschools throughout the forty seven counties of Kenya on preschool environment as another factor that influence preschools accessibility to school would expound the understanding of the present study.

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