

Influence of Parental Socio-Economic Status 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 influence of parental socio-economic status on pre-schoolers access to early childhood education in Kenya. The objective of the study was to find out influence of parental socio-economic status on pre-schoolers access to early childhood education in Kenya. The study adopted concurrent triangulation research design and was informed by Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979) and 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 from the analysis revealed that socio-economic status matter most in determining preschoolers' access to education, where a social factor like level of parents' education determined access to ECE by 70%. It was concluded that the higher the level of education of parents, the higher the chances their children have to access preschools. It was recommended that policy makers and stakeholders come up with the course for adult literacy as a pre-requisite tool for good accessibility to preschools. The present study also recommends that parents should sacrifice themselves in engaging with education of their children. The researcher recommends for a further research 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, Richter and 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).

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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 trends.

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 (NER) 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. For this purpose, the study seeks to investigate into selected parental factors as determinants of preschoolers’ access to early childhood education in Masaba North Sub-County, Kenya

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 do 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 investigate selected parental variables as determinants of preschoolers' access to early childhood education in Masaba North Sub-County, Kenya.

1.3 Purpose of the study:

The purpose of the study was to explore the influence of Parental Socio-economic Status on Pre-Schoolers access to Early Childhood Education in Kenya.

1.4 Objective of the Study:

The Objective of the study was to explore the influence of Parental Socio-economic Status 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

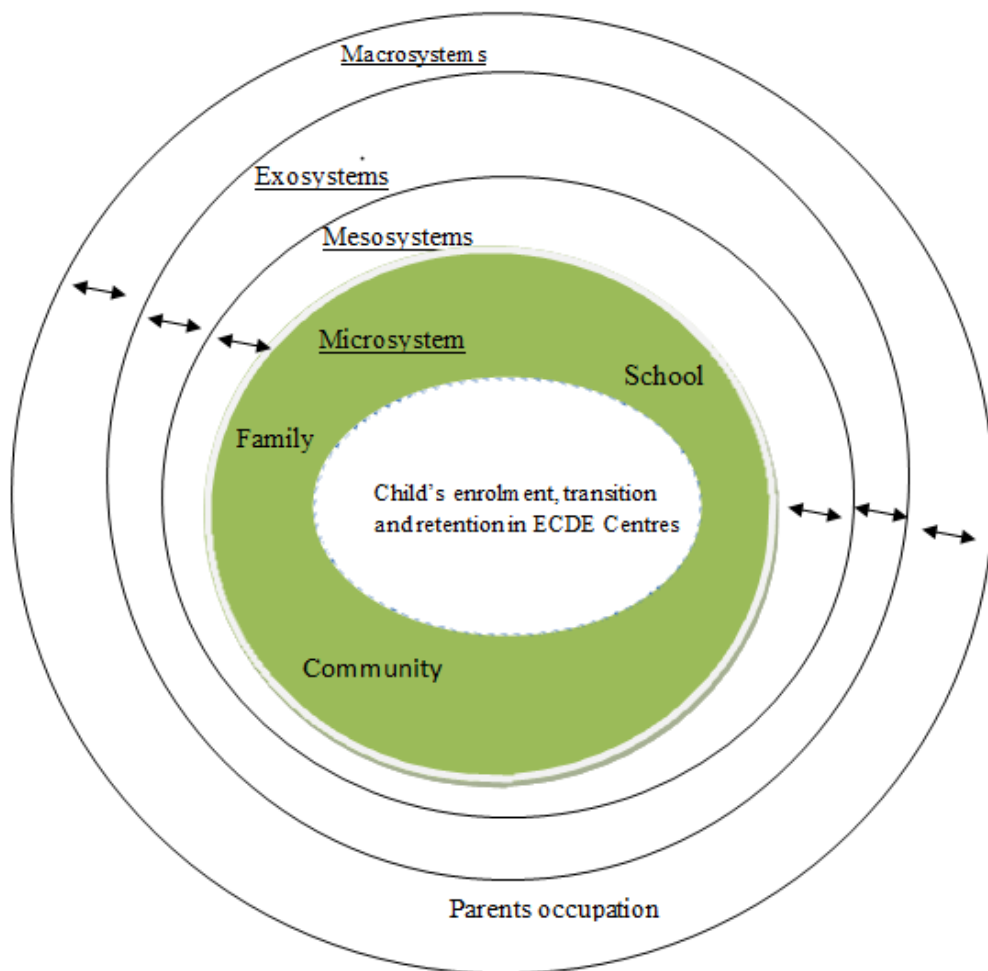


Figure 1.1: Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory

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 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 Exoystem 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 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 Social-Economic Status and students' Access to Education:

Economic and social inequalities exist throughout the world and was perceived to have a negative implications on children's access to education especially the economically disadvantaged children (Jerrim, 2010). In this regard, Jerrim further observes that in the United Kingdom, children of wealthy parents have much access to education than children from poor families and this was likely to increase in the future unless steps were taken to ensure that all children have access to quality education.

Anderson (2010) conducted a longitudinal study to investigate into the possible reasons why parents perceive that their kindergarten child complains about school. The study employed questionnaires to collect data from parent from the Early Childhood Class of 1998-1999. The study mainly targeted those children whose parents indicated that their children complained more than once per week during the first two months of school. To establish the effects of maternal education levels and family structure on transition practices received by the child and prior preschool experience, Chi-square tests were employed. The study found that maternal level of education was a positive predictor of children's effective transitions and experiences of greater success. Anderson (2010) study differs with the current study in that the study adopted a longitudinal approach in which some respondents might drop due to natural attrition or change of resident unlike the present study that used cross-sectional approach which was perceived to take a shorter time when conducting it.

Farooq, Chaudhry, Shafiq, and Berhanu (2011) conducted a survey to examine different factors influencing the academic performance of secondary school students in a metropolitan city of Pakistan. The respondents for this study were 10th grade students (300 male and 300 female). Questionnaire were used to collect information about different factors relating to academic performance of students. Standard t-test and ANOVA were applied to investigate the effect of different factors on students' achievement. The results of the study revealed that socio-economic status (SES) and parents'

education had a significant effect on students' overall academic achievement as well as achievement in the subjects of Mathematics and English. The high and average socio-economic level affects the performance more than the lower level. It was very interesting that parents' education means more than their occupation in relation to their children's academic performance at school. The reviewed study used secondary school students as the sample size unlike the current study that used preschool pupils who were perceived to differ in terms of developmental challenges.

In USA, Greenberg and Kahn, (2011) conducted a study on the influence of parental immigration status on early childhood education and care enrolment. The study established that the immigrant children were under-enrolled particularly in formal settings. The study further revealed that the immigrant status did not affect enrolment of three-five-year-old children when various parental and child characteristics were controlled. Socio-economic factors were found to predict access to early childhood education than immigrant status. Greenberg et al (2011) study involved the United States immigrant children. The current study on the other hand sampling of Kenyan preschoolers was based on concurrent triangulation approach.

In Australia, Trewin (2004) gave a social trend that indicated that 46% of Indigenous four year olds attended preschool compared with 57% of non-Indigenous children of the same age. The participation rate for Indigenous children in education was lower than for non-Indigenous children of the same age in remote and rural area. However, among three years old Indigenous participation was higher than non-Indigenous in all remote areas outside major Cities; while, among five years old, it was lower. Trewin study differs with the current study in that it was carried out in rural area in Australia and the current was carried in both rural and urban settings of Masaba Sub-County, Kenya.

According to Abagi (2005) girls from households with low education and limited resources were more disadvantaged as compared to boys from same background. In such cases parents often prioritize basic family needs and boy's education than girls' education. This would lead to the conclusion that parents with a higher level of education; better paying occupations and larger amount of resources were more willing and able to ensure that both their sons and daughters were educated. On the other hand uneducated parents were often disadvantaged and least able to appreciate and support their children's education especially girls. This study compared girls and boys from households with low education and limited resources. On the other hand the current study examined parental variables as they affect children's access to preschool. The study was also carried in Masaba North which was a different geographical area.

In a study done by Mtahabwa (2011) on the effects of parental demand and choice on the access to early childhood education in Tanzania, the study established that children in urban areas had a better chances of participating in ECDE programs than their rural counterparts because the preschools were near their homes and where schools were far, the children were transported by their economically able parents. Access according to geographical distance favours urban children had also been fund elsewhere in the world including Bangladesh, Kenya and Ghana (Mtahabwa, 2011). Access according to age in Tanzania had since formalization of ECDE always been in favour of older children. This was similar case to Kenya, something quite opposite of most successful ECDE programs should operate. Best results occur when ECDE programs were designed to cater for children in their first few years when development processes in various domains were rapid. The study differs with the current study in that it was on the demands and choice of ECDE centres while the current study established the parental factors influencing access to pre-primary.

In Kenya, Appleton (2008) conducted a study on the relationship between parental factors and primary school children's progress in school. The study found that parental education contribution significantly equally toward both boys' and girls' progress in school. Parents who were educated were highly expected to impart a positive view of schooling among their children. Appleton (2008) further observed that education experience and outlook of parents was transmitted to their offspring. Studies also found that there was a direct relationship between parental level of education and girls' enrolment and retention in school. This was due to the fact that educated parents with high income were able to provide their children with conducive home environment, provide all necessities of school hence encourage participation of girls in school because they understand value of education and benefits to the child. While Appleton (2008) study was conducted in primary school based on pupils' achievements the current study was conducted in preschools and was based on the factors influencing preschoolers' access to ECDE.

In another study in Kenya, Owuor (2010) conducted a study to establish factors that were influencing provision of early childhood education in Madiany Division. The study adopted descriptive survey methodology with both qualitative and quantitative approaches to source and analyze data. The study used probability random sampling as well as purposive sampling procedure. Two sets of questionnaires and an interview schedule were administered to ECD teachers, parents and

a DICECE officer respectively Findings revealed that the socio-economic factors in terms of parental education and income level significantly influenced the provision of ECDE services. To improve preschoolers' access to early childhood education, the study recommended that the government should support the sector through sound policy framework and budgetary allocations. Owuor study differs with the current study since it adopted Sigmund Freud's Psycho-Analytic Theory. The current study on the other hand adopted Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems and Emile Durkheim's Functional Theory (1858-1916).

Kontoma (2010) conducted a study to investigate into the influence of parental characteristics on girls' retention in early childhood Development centres in Tarbaj Division, Wajir East District. The study adopted expose factor design of which simple random sampling and convenience sampling techniques were to obtain the sample size. The study used questionnaires, focused group discussions, interview schedules, and documentary analysis to collect data. Findings revealed that parents who were educated valued and encouraged their daughters to continue with Preschool and lower primary education, the main economic activity of parents whose daughters had dropped out of school was nomadic pastoralist, family size and poverty were also the major hindrance to girls' retention in schools. While Kontoma (2010) study was based on the parents' characteristics and their effects on retention of girls in early childhood Development centres in arid areas. The current study covered issues dealing with the effect of parent characteristics on school access of children of both gender.

Kipkulei, Chepchieng, Boitt and Chepchieng (2012) conducted a study to establish the factors that were affecting girls' participation in primary schools in Kenya. The study employed a survey design of which 210 girls were sampled using simple random technique. A questionnaire was used to collect data that were analysed by use of descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages). The findings of the study revealed that socio-economic, socio-cultural and school related factors affect girls' participation in primary schools in Kenya. Results further indicated that 74% of the girls strongly agreed that income of parents affect their participation in primary school education whereas 21.5% agreed. Thus, cumulatively 95.5% of the girls were in agreement that indeed parental income was a factor that had affected them. The current study differs with Kipkulei et al (2012) study in many ways. It was done in primary schools using a sample of girls drawn from primary classes 6, 7 and 8. On the other hand the current study was carried out between parents and teachers in Masaba North Sub-County, Kenya.

Chepleting, Chepkemei, Yano and Chebet (2013) did a study on the factors influencing Girls' Participation in Free Primary Education in Schools in Kapenguria, Kenya. The descriptive survey design was adopted for this study. Purposive sampling and stratified random sampling technique was used to obtain the sample size for the study. The study found that there were low income levels of parents and the occupation of most parent/guardian was small scale farming. Most parents not being capable of meeting girls' needs hence mostly do not access school. Chepleting et al (2013) study differ with the current study was done in primary schools using a sample of girls. On the other hand the current study was carried out for all gender preschool children between parents, and teachers in Masaba North Sub-County.

Huisman, Rani, and Smits, (2010) studied the role of socio-economic and cultural factors, and of characteristics of the educational infrastructure on primary school enrolment, The sample constituted 70,000 children living in 439 districts of 26 states of India. The results indicated that most of the variation in educational enrolment (around 70%) was explained by factors at the household level, of which socio-economic factors were most important. The findings further revealed that in rural areas inequalities between socio-economic status groups were lower than in urban centres which significantly influenced children's access to education. The reviewed study was done in primary schools using a very large sample of 70,000 pupils. On the other hand the current study was carried out among preschool children, parents, and teachers using a small sample of less than 200 respondents.

In Kenya, a study done by Koech (2010) in Uasin Gishu district showed that parents with no education certificate and those with college diploma differed significantly in their level of involvement in pre-primary school activities. Specifically, the study showed that parents with low level of education felt uneasy in their contribution to parent-school partnership modes than parents with higher educations. Despite the fact that parents' satisfaction with and involvement in pre-primary education were related construct (Griffith, 2010), the findings would only be generalized to pre-primary school parents in other regions with the same characteristics, hence the need for present study was done with pre-primary school parents in Nyamira county.

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.

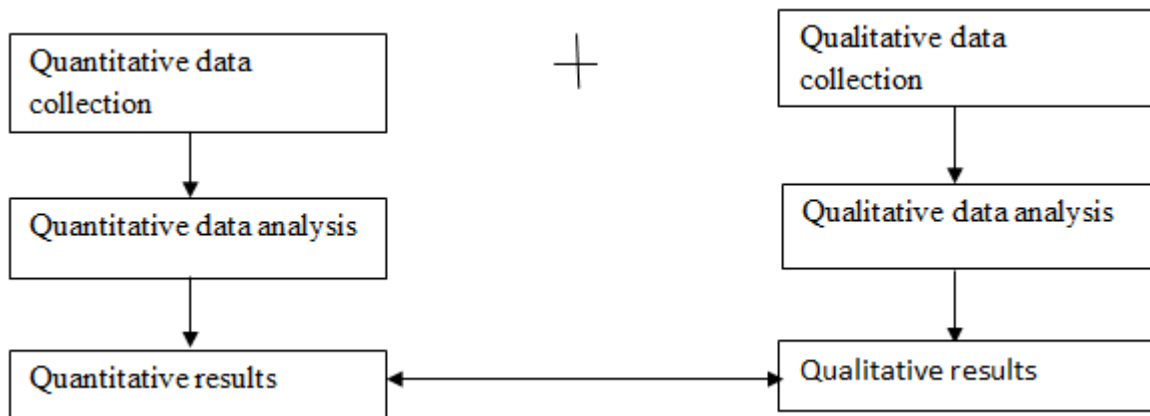


Figure 1.3: Shows a figurative representation of a Concurrent Triangulation Research Design.

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^oE to 35.80^oE and 0.29^oS to 1^oS.

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 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	

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 confidentiality 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 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.

International Journal of Novel Research in Education and Learning

 Vol. 5, Issue 1, pp: (53-83), Month: January-February 2018, Available at: www.noveltyjournals.com

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. Wolveto (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 RESULTS

4.1 Parental Social-Economic status and access to preschool response by Parents:

4.1.1. Average monthly income in Ksh and access to education:

The study also sought to establish the amount of money the parents earn per month in order to establish their ability to enrol their children to ECE Centres. The responses were as shown in table 4.6 below.

Table 4.1: Average monthly income in Ksh and access to education

Average monthly income	Frequency	Percent
Below 1500	11	14.5
1500-1999	25	32.9
2000 – 5500	35	46.1
5501 and above	5	6.6
Total	76	100.0

Source: Field data, 2017

The study elicited information about average monthly income in Ksh; they were grouped into categories of; below 1500, 1500 to 1999, 2000 to 5500 and 5501 and above. According to the findings in table 4.5, it was found that most respondents; 35 (46.1%) had average income of 2000 to 5500 Kshs, this was closely followed by 25 respondents representing 32.9 percent whose average income was 1500 to 1999 Kshs. It was also indicated that 11 respondents representing (14.5%) earned averagely below 1500 Kshs in a month and 5 (6.6%) earned 5501Kshs and above monthly. This translated that parents in Masaba Sub-County are not financially stable, since, it is only 6.6% of them who earned more than 5500 Kenya shillings and as a result this may led to lack of money to enrol and educate their children. According to Kipkulei et al (2012) parental income was a factor that affected preschoolers’ access to school.

With respect to parents’ average income and its influence on children’s preschool access, the interview results revealed that parents are quite concerned about the education of their children, although they do not have enough money to buy school materials those keeping them at home. The head teacher from school G explained:

Lack of finances to buy materials required by the school... if the child has no books and the parent has no money to give the child, he or she will not come to school as he or she does not want to come and explain.(G1)

With respect to parents’ average income and its influence on children’s preschool access, the interview results revealed that Parents who could not afford to buy school learning materials for their children as result they kept them out of school. Consequently, some head teachers thought that such parents were not interested in the education of their children. One head teacher from school H remarked:

Some parents see the school as a day nursery for their young children and they leave their children with the knowledge that teachers will look after them while they are away working for day wages until evening when they return home, therefore they do not provide the children with learning materials. (H1)

In spite of this prestigious recognition they enjoy as head teachers in a society, they have to go an extra mile to sometime subsidising the school fees for some pupils who are almost dropping school due to their parents’ inability to pay school fees because their income is too low and is sessional. This finding to some extent confirms a previous study by Agezo (2010) which lists passion for work as one of the key characteristics of head teachers.

Parents always sacrifice a lot to pay school fees and provide learning materials although they don't even get any significant incentives. That is why sometimes it is not easy for me as a head teacher to send home pupils for school fees daily because I know most parents earn very low income. And always when I look at these children I feel the need to help them by subsidising their school fees and let the parents pay for feeding programme only so as they can access education. I see that their future is in our hands. So despite our low income we still do our best. (F1.)

The qualitative analysis of responses revealed that most parents encounter many financial challenges throughout their children educational journey. One of the head teachers (A1) pointed out that many of the pupils have no proper parental care and support due to broke homes. So, she felt it as an obligation of the parent to nurture their children. The parents’ joy is not only rooted in enrolling the children in preschool but more importantly to see their transition successful and career advancement, although financial constrain was their major obstacle as observes by Bronfenbrenner (1979), and also Buchman (2000) confirmed by stating that low income parents view schooling as an avenue to economic and social success.

4.1.2 Occupation of Parents and access to preschool education:

Table 4.2 below shows the parental occupation and its effect on the access and enrolment of children 2n preschool.

Table 4.2: Occupation of Parents

Occupation and Parents	Frequency	Percentage
Formal Employment	29	38.4
Informal Employment	43	57.5
Unemployed	4	4.1
Total	76	100

Source: Field data, 2017

From the findings of the Table 4.2, it was clear that majority of the parents (57.5%) worked in the informal sector while only 38.4% worked in the formal sector. Three of the parents constituting 4.1% were unemployed; a notable aspect of the finding indicated that these were parents with preschooler. Informal employment had more than half of the respondents. These parents engage in manual works such as petty trading, subsistent farming and serving as day-labourers at construction sites, which do not earn them high income. As a matter of fact, the parents are not able to financially support their children adequately in their educational demands as a result of low daily income and returns for business, thus keeping the pupils away from school. . Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) ecological perspective frame also illustrates that working environment of parents also influences the interest of parents to engage in educating their children.

With respect to parents’ occupation and its influence on children’s preschool access, the interview with Sub-county education officer (P) revealed that some of the parents task their children to sell on the road-side at instead of encouraging them to study at home, which in the long run may have effect on the child’s preschool access for quality education. The head teacher (H1) also confirmed this practice of parents encouraging their children to sell at night by stating categorically what one parent told him when he asked why his child was sometimes absent from school:

“I have advised my children to engage in “petty” income-gathering activities to raise some money to support themselves in their schooling and also to supplement our family income since what we earn as parents is not sufficient to support the whole family” (H1)

The head teacher of school A remarked, most of the parents use their occupation as an excuse and for that matter, they hardly attend functions organized by the school. Even when they had been invited by the teacher to discuss pertinent issues concerning their children, they hardly honour the invitation. This behaviour is usually associated with Parents of the “Informal” occupation category. One of the parents had this to say on the same issue as he quoted:

International Journal of Novel Research in Education and Learning

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“My work is a daily-earning type of occupation, if you don’t go, no money to feed the family. This makes it difficult for me to attend school functions when there is neither food nor money in the house to feed the children”(A1)

Head teacher C1 lamented:

“I rather expect the parents who are Informal in the occupational level due to their low education to attend to school calls always, and pay particular attention to their children’s educational demands so that their children can attain the level they (the parent) couldn’t attain, on the contrary, these parents are the worst offenders”.

Another head teacher F1 observed that parents who are in formal work such as teaching, nursing and the other civil servants have knowledge about what their children had been taught in school. They help their children to study at home, do their assignments and sometimes supplement what the teachers have thought them with what they know at home since private education is good as posted by Tooley, J., & Dixon, P. (2005). Those who cannot teach their children employ the services of other teachers to organize additional tuition for their children which in the long run help raise their preschool education access. These statements from one of the parent confirmed this pronouncement made by teacher F1:

“I am a nurse by profession and am not fully abreast with some of the topics in the syllabus currently since they are not related to my job as at now. So I have employed the services of a teacher who leaves in our vicinity to help my child in the subject areas my child did not perform to my satisfaction. And God being so good, my child has changed for the better in those subject areas he had difficulties”

Participant P reported his belief most parents who are unemployed do not see the see of educating the children because of the culture they are contaminated with in the society while majority who are professionals value education because of their working environments where they see that bright future of a child is attained through access to education as they accessed as well as they accessed. That it is a factor that parents’ choice to send their children to a preschool is the hope that it will lead to enhanced employment opportunities for their children in future:

Education even has a certain cachet sometimes, I think. You know, I would notice a change in the culture myself in the last couple of years. I think that those who go through school fluently, or have gone through a preschool, almost have a little... edge.(P)

It came to light that, some of the children of parents who belong to the Informal occupation category do menial jobs to support themselves in school that makes them stay out of school in some occasions, therefore, affecting their preschool access opportunity, while this was not the case with children of parents in the formal sector. The study also, found that the occupation of most parents was small scale farming. Most parents not being capable of meeting preschoolers’ needs hence mostly do not access preschool. Chepleting et al (2013) study also on the other hand sought to find out how parents’ occupation influenced primary school girl access to education, it identified that the occupation had an impact on children’s school access, on the other hand the current study was carried out for all gender preschool children in Masaba North Sub-County.

4.1.3 My ability to support the ECDE programmes is limited by my financial incapability:

In an attempt to inquire from parents with preschoolers whether they are able to support their children with preschool education, Table 4.3 presents the ability of parents to pay school fees for their preschool children and its effect on access of preschool center

Table 4.3: My ability to support the ECDE programmes is limited by my financial incapability

Financial incapability	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	12	15.8
Agree	35	46.1
Undecided	0	0
Disagree	2	2.6
Strongly disagree	4	5.3
Total	76	100.0

Source: Field data, 2017

Table 4.3 presents the statistical details about parents’ ability to finance the preschool education of their children as a determinant of access to early childhood education centers. The majority; 35 (46.1%) they indicated “Agree”, although they were not able to cater for their preschool children to their level of satisfaction, then followed by 12(15.8%) of parents who strongly agree that financial constrains don’t allow them to support the preschool education of their children totally. while less than three third of respondents; 2 (2.6%) of the parents said that, they are able to support their preschool child education to their level of satisfaction indicating “Disagree” and only 4 respondents with 5.3% of the respondents Strongly disagreed that ability to support the ECDE programmes was not limited by their financial incapability. None of the respondents was undecided whether ability to support the ECDE programmes was not limited by their financial incapability since it indicated 0.0%.

The researcher's quest to understand possible influence of parents’ financial incapability on preschooler access to education or not, led to the performing of Cross-tabulation and Chi-Square test of significance analysis between employment category of parents with preschool children (as socio-economic independent variable) and their ability to support their preschoolers’ education using the parents’ occupation as a measure of their financial stability. The result from the cross-tabulation analysis indicated a significant relationship between the independent and the dependent variables. Majority of the respondents who are formally employed, 73.3%, indicated they are able to support their preschooler services and academic activities, while 26.7% indicated they are unable to do so due to their financial incapability. On the other hand, as many as 68.2% and 100% of informal employee and unemployed, respectively, reported they could not support their child or children preschool education. Parents who are formally employed are more likely to have constant income to enable them support their preschooler than their counterparts in the informal sector and the unemployed. This may result from the fact that formally employed parents have relatively reliable and constant source of income and well-structured working time schedule making it easier to take care of their preschool child or children. From the exhibits of the Chi-Square test, at a significance level of 0.02 with its degree of freedom (df) at 2, produced a chi-square (x2) value of 7.99 where (P < 0.05). This indicates a statistically significant relationship between parents' occupation (as social-economic independent variable) and the ability to support their preschool child education, to access ECE (as dependent variable). Table 4.4 below depicts the statistical results from the cross-tabulation and chi-square test analysis.

Table 4.4: Ability to support the ECDE programmes is limited by my financial incapability

Occupation	Ability to support the ECDE programmes is limited by my financial incapability.				
	Disagree	Agree	X2	Df	sig (P Value)
Employment Category					
Formal	11 (73.3%)	4 (26.7%)			
Informal	7 (31.8%)	15 (68.2%)	7.99	2	0.018
Unemployed	0(0%)	2(100%)			

Source: Field data, 2017

The interview schedule also revealed that most of the head teachers (90%) were of the view that it was the wish of most parents to have their preschoolers educated but they were limited by their financial incapability, that poverty was to one to blame. As the head teacher (B1) explained, parents felt that:

If a child passes to go to primary and secondary school, more money will be needed for fees. So they would rather the child remains at home or goes to look for petty wage jobs.(B1)

4.1.4 My child has been sent home for school fees and stayed at home:

In a bid to find out how regular preschoolers are sent home for school fees and stay at home due to parental financial incapability, this was carefully assessed as illustrated in Table 4.5 below, so as to show how this influenced children’s access to preschool.

Table 4.5: Child has been sent home for school fees and stayed at home

Sent home for school fees and stayed at home	Frequency	Percent
Very often	14	18.4
Often	35	46.1
Rarely	21	27.6
Never	6	7.9
Total	76	100.0

Source: Field data, 2017

According to the findings represented in Table 4.5, majority of parents engaged in this study depict the picture that it was often children were regularly sent for fees and stayed at home by 46.1%. Since, early childhood education centers introduces the learners to various equipment of play which later helps in children's transition and development to technological trends and the child's mental capabilities and physical growth, the learner enjoys living and learning through play hence develops self-awareness, self-esteem and self-confidence, promotes creativity, self-expression and discovery through exploration of skills. This means that most preschoolers' retention and transition in and through ECDE centers effectively, will be difficult since they stay at home often when sent for school fees. However, the rating of 7.9% being low was obtained for the fact that preschoolers were "Never" sent home for fees and stayed home. This implies that it is only a handful of parents who disagreed that their preschoolers have never stayed at home because they were sent for it. Some respondents mostly agreed with the view that it was rarely happening that children were sent for fees and stayed at home (27.6%). It is indicated that some children were regularly sent home for fees and stayed at home with 18.4%.

According to the qualitative findings head teachers A1, D1, G1 and C1 stated that low ECE access have become a problem in most of the schools in Masaba North Sub-Location because some parents were not engaged with paying fees for their children because they apparently did not value education because of their own illiteracy and they sent their children to school only because they were compelled by the law to provide basic education to their children (Constitution of Kenya, 2010). That is why, they did not mind even to pay school fees for them, subjecting the pupil to be sent home for school fees very often, affecting the pupils' access to quality ECDE. The head teacher from school (C) mentioned:

No, we actually want parents to come to school to pay the school fees in time to avoid this issues of sending pupils home for school fees because most of them don't come back in the same day and few others even the whole week, but you see you cannot learn or manage the school minus funds so it content me to send them home for fees. And the major problem is from those parents who are not educated, who to them, education is not important and they don't value it and they don't expect that it will matter if they take their children to school or not in future. In most cases, some will bring the child to school because if the chief is going around the homes and find the pupils at home during schooling time he may arrest the parent. Some will actually tell you that 'I came because the chief said that he would come to my home as my children are still at home.' So, to these parents, have negative attitude towards education that it is of no value that they can do without it, yet still eat and live.(C1)

The head teacher, school B added:

Lack of money to buy materials required by the school for leaning... if the child has no books and on top of that has been sent home for school fees and the parent has no money to give the child, the pupil will not come back to school as he or she does not want to come and explain.(B1)

The head teacher at school (I1) explained:

The head teacher (I1) also confirmed it is parents' role in fulfilling their basic obligations. She noted that parents must pay school levies when needed for pupils to learn. This practice of parents not paying school fees is due to irresponsibility, their children to help them in the business stating categorically what one parent told him when she asked why his child stayed home when sent for school fees:

“I normally ask my children to accompany me to the market to assist me in selling vegetables when they are at home they have been for school fees so that we can raise some money to support them in their schooling and also to supplement our family income since what we earn from this business is not sufficient to support the whole family”

According to the findings, the parents interviewed were aware of their basic obligations of educating a child and tried to meet them. This is in concurrence with Bronfenbrenner (1979) who states that it is the parents’ basic obligation to provide for their children’s needs such as food, shelter and safety. Head teachers felt that most parents met their children’s material needs. However, the head teachers interviewed were concerned that some did not pay for their children fees. They felt that parents’ low social-economic status was the cause of the apparent indifference towards education on the part of some parents and therefore, some parents left their children to stay home. Furthermore, teachers felt that poor parenting led to the problems they had with the pupils, resulting them to be sent home for school fees and stayed at home so the child lose direction of education.

4.1.5 Highest level of education of parents and access to preschool education:

Table 4.6 below shows the educational level of parents and its influence on children enrolment and access in preschool.

Table 4.6 : Level of education of parents

Level of education of parents	Frequency	Percent
Below primary	17	22.4
Primary	20	26.3
High school	27	35.5
Higher level College	8	10.5
University	4	5.3
Total	76	100.0

Source: Field data, 2017

Data solicited on the educational background of parents revealed that the parents were mainly educated up to High school level (35.5%). This means that they were aware of the advantages of training children through early childhood education and enrolment of a child in a preschool meaning also that taking child to school seems to be closely related to the level of education of the parent. There was evidence that parents with more education are more likely to include quality education to their kid according previous research by (Barbarin et al., 2008; Johansen et al., 1996). That was followed by those who had primary school education and below primary level education at (26.3%) and (22.4%) respectively, implying that still there is a good number of parents who are undereducated or uneducated meaning they can’t encourage their children to develop interest in schooling unlike well-educated parents. This relates to UNICEF (2004) which stated that educated parents will be a role model to their children and will cultivate a positive attitude towards school in their children from an early age. Those who had attained a first Degree (5.3%) whereas 10.5% had gone up to higher level College, and 4.5% educated up to High School level.

On parents’ education level and its effect to children access to ECE, most of the head teachers (85%) reported that the majority of the parents of children in their school are primary and below primary leavers who are not very much concerned about the accessibility of their children to preschool. They reported that these parents do not even attend PTA meetings let alone make follow-ups to the school to check on their children’s academic progress. They do not adequately provide enough support for the teaching and learning of their children. This makes the academic development of the children in the community a very difficult task.

The head teachers of school D stressed that most of the parents had little or low education and therefore had little interest in visiting the school whenever they do not understand some issues concerning their child’s education. These parents only visit the school when their children had a disciplinary problem in the school. In the long run, the academic growth of the children is affected and they drop the school. Anderson (2010) longitudinal study agrees that parents’ education levels is a positive determinant factor for pupils’ access to education and successful transition.

4.1.6. Marital Status of Respondents (Parent) and access to preschool:
Table 4.7: Marital Status of Parents

Marital status of parents	Frequency	Percent
Single	15	18.9
Married	53	71.6
Divorced	4	4.1
Widowed	5	5.4
Total	76	100.0

Source: Field data, 2017

The study found that most of the parents (71.6%) were married. As much as 18.9% of the respondents were single parents. This implies that children from single parent families started assuming much more domestic and financial responsibilities as according to Children Advocacy (2008). This results to heavy burdens on them leading to poor enrolment in preschools and access to education. These parents are too busy at times such that they do not supervise the children and therefore, lack concern with their children's school work. Thus the level of stress in their lives tend to affect their children's school enrolment too Children Advocacy (2008). 5.4% were widowed. 4.1% were divorced which means that as according to Orodho (2013) parents who are divorced mostly do not work together for the benefit of their children as they are busy fighting for the custody of the children and also property. These parents do not even want to see each other eye to eye. This stresses the children as they are deprived of parental love and care. The parents also tend to have little time to be concerned with their children's education as to whether they will attend school or not and if in school their academic progress, furthermore the child is also too stressed to think of anything else other than their current family situation. These children also tend to have lower educational aspirations hence the low levels of school access, enrolment, retention and transition result. It was clear from also qualitative findings that, while most families were married parents, single parents headed many homes also. Head teachers in the confirmed earlier observations concerning parental status and its impact with preschoolers' access to education.

The head teacher of school (A) when interviewed about the marital status of parent, he estimated that the majority of children lived with their parents, while a significant number lived with a single parent or are orphaned. No school had the data to support these estimates but it was clear that foster parents cared for many children. The head teacher of school (H) gave an estimate of the family structures in her school:

I think 50% of our pupils are living with their parents (nuclear families), one quarter live with single parents and a quarter are orphaned and living with the grandmothers.(H1)

The head teacher of school B concurred, adding that the parents' marital status generally caused the parents to be disinterested in education thus affection the access of he or his children's access to preschool:

According to their children, these parents marital status sometime make them not to care their children to lead a care-free life. If you hear about their problems most are frustrated because of the way they were brought up in their homes.(B1)

The findings revealed that many single parents experience a great deal of difficulty with raising their families alone. Participant (P) observed that:

Most single mothers left their children in the care of relatives, neighbours or they left them at home to look after themselves when they went to work. Others sent their children to day-care centers until they returned home in the evening. (P)

The head teacher (I1) added:

Some children come telling me, teacher I have to go to the market to buy food and cook before Mother comes. (I1)

Also the find show that single mothers were more numerous than single fathers. Head teacher (F1) added:

Most pupils have no fathers, maybe the mother never got married or the father left them and some died. Also, single fathers don't stay unmarried long before they remarry and the child lives with a stepmother, who in most cases never wanted to spend their income in pay the school fees and buy learning material for these children, simples because they are not her biological kids. Therefore, these resulted into losing direction for education of this children. (F1)

The study revealed that single fathers did not bother much about the child once he or she was fed. One teacher observed that children living with the father were unkempt when they came to school because the father was only concerned with eating and not with washing clothes and other matters unlike the situation of single mothers. Children of single mothers were more likely to perform better than those of single fathers.

Another head teacher of school G remarked:

Children of single mothers perform better than those of single fathers because mothers encourage their children and are together most of the time at home unlike the fathers.(G1)

Therefore, the findings proved that married parents were more likely to be involved in their children's education than single parents. In support of parental marital status power in determining children's access to education; Ecological Systems Theory, Belsky's (1984) further observe that the factors that affected parenting marital status and how these factors in turn influenced child-rearing, consequently influencing child development including education transition because, parenting was influenced by forces emanating from within the parent and the social context in which the parent-child relationship and livelihood was embedded. This social context includes marital relations.

5. CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATION AND SUGGESTION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

5.1 Conclusion on Parental socio-economic status on preschoolers' access to early childhood education in Kenya:

It was concluded that the higher the level of education of parents, the higher the chances for their children to access preschool centers in Masaba North Sub-County. This implies that low parental educational background may result in low chances of preschool access whereas higher educational background of parents has a higher tendency of influencing positively the accessibility of preschool by their children.

5.2 Recommendations on Parental socio-economic status on Preschoolers' access to early childhood education in Kenya:

There is a need to improve on level of education of parents in Masaba North Sub-County so as to improve preschoolers' access to schools. It is important that policy makers and stakeholders strengthen the course for adult literacy as a pre-requisite tool for good accessibility to preschools by the children.

Parents should improve the level of control and care of their children, show more interest and concern in the academic work of their children by providing conducive atmosphere for studies at home, providing materials for studies and helping the children in their studies and homework.

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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