

PERSPECTIVES OF PRESCHOOL LEAD TEACHERS ON EPSTEIN'S THEORETICAL LENS OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN PRESCHOOLERS' EDUCATION IN KENYA

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Abstract: Growing body of literature suggests that Epstein's theoretical lens of Parenting, communicating, volunteering, and learning at home, decision making and collaborating with the Community has little bearing on preschoolers' education. The purpose of the study was to explore Perspectives of Preschool lead teachers on Epstein's theoretical lens of Parental involvement in Pre-schoolers education in Kenya. The objective of the study was to find out the perspectives of preschool lead teachers on Epstein's theoretical lens of Parental involvement in preschoolers' education. The study employed concurrent triangulation research design of the mixed methods research. The study employed Epstein's theory (1987) and a conceptual framework. The units of analysis were 65 public primary schools. The target populations were 65 Preschool lead teachers and 6 Community Opinion Leaders. The sample consisted of 46 preschool lead teachers and 6 Community opinion leaders. Stratified and purposive sampling techniques were used in the study. The study employed Questionnaires, interview and Focus Group Discussion to obtain data for study. Reliability of the instruments was ascertained by piloting in 7 public primary schools while validity was ascertained through expert judgment of the supervisors. Data was analyzed by qualitative and quantitative analysis. Qualitative data analysis involved thematic analysis. Quantitative data analysis involved descriptive statistics in the form of frequency counts, percentages and means. Findings of the study revealed that, generally, the preschool lead teachers scored a mean of 3.48(69.63%) on the likert scale showing that they were undecided on application of Epstein's theoretical lens of parental involvement in preschoolers education. They perceived poor home parenting and learning of preschoolers and that parents were not properly involved in decision making of their children at school. It was concludes that preschoolers' home parenting, learning at home and parental involvement in decision making affecting preschoolers at school were in jeopardy. The study recommended parents to rethink their learning roles of preschoolers' education at home. This study would be significant to all the stakeholders of education. A study on effective parental home determinants of preschoolers learning would expound the understanding of the present study.

Keywords: Epstein's' theoretical lens, Parental involvement, preschoolers' education.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study:

Epstein's theoretical lens of parental involvement in preschoolers' education entails: Parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, and decision making and collaborating with the Community (Epstein, 2016; Epstein, Sanders, Simon, Salinas, Jansorn, and Voorhis, 2002). First, Parenting according to them means assisting families with

parenting skills, family support, understanding child and adolescent development, and setting home conditions to support learning at each age and grade level. It also assists schools in understanding families' backgrounds, cultures, and goals for children. Parenting according to the theory helps all families establish home environments to support children as students, suggests home conditions that support learning at each grade level- Workshops, videotapes, computerized phone messages on parenting and child rearing at each age and grade level, Parent education and other courses or training for parents, family support programs to assist families with health, nutrition, and other services, home visits at transition points to pre-school, elementary, middle, and high school; Neighborhood meetings to help families understand schools and to help schools understand families.

Secondly, communicating with families about school programs and student progress, that there should be a two-way communication channel between school and home. This involves designing effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communications about school programs and children's progress, Conferences with every parent at least once a year, with follow-ups as needed; Language translators to assist families as needed; Weekly or monthly folders of student work sent home for review and comments; Parent/student pickup of report card, with conferences on improving grades; Regular schedule of useful notices, memos, phone calls, newsletters, and other communications; Clear information on choosing schools or courses, programs, and activities within schools; Clear information on all school policies, programs, reforms, and transitions.

Thirdly, Volunteering involves improving recruitment, training, activities, and schedules to involve families as volunteers and as audiences at the school or in other locations to enable educators to work with volunteers who support students and the school. According to the theory, it means Recruiting and organizing parent help and support, school and classroom volunteer program to help teachers, administrators, students, and other parents, Parent room or family centre for volunteer work, meetings, resources for families, Annual postcard survey to identify all available talents, times, and locations of volunteers, Class parent, telephone tree, or other structures to provide all families with needed information and Parent patrols or other activities to aid safety and operation of school programs.

Fourthly, learning at Home involves families with their children in academic learning at home, including homework, goal setting, and other curriculum-related activities and encouraging teachers to design homework that enables students to share and discuss interesting tasks. Provide information and ideas to families about how to help students at home with homework and other curriculum-related activities, decisions, and planning, information for families on skills required for students in all subjects at each grade, Information on homework policies and how to monitor and discuss schoolwork at home, Information on how to assist students to improve skills on various class and school assessments, regular schedule of homework that requires students to discuss and interact with families on what they are learning in class, Calendars with activities for parents and students at home, Family math, science, and reading activities at school, holiday learning activities, Family participation in setting student goals each year and in planning for college or work.

Fifthly, decision-Making involves including families as participants in school decisions, governance, and advocacy activities through school councils or improvement teams, committees, and parent organizations. According to the theory, it means including parents in school decisions, developing parent leaders and representatives' active parent teacher meetings or other parent organizations, advisory councils, or committees (e.g., curriculum, safety, personnel) for parent leadership and participation, Independent advocacy groups to lobby and work for school reform and improvements, sub county-level councils and committees for family and community involvement, Information on school or local elections for school representatives and networks to link all families with parent representatives. lastly, Collaborating with the Community means Coordinating resources and services for families, students, and the school with community groups, including businesses, agencies, cultural and civic organizations, and colleges or Universities and enable all to contribute service to the community. Identify and integrate resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning and development, Information for students and families on community health, cultural, recreational, social support, and other programs or services, information on community activities that link to learning skills and talents, including holiday programs for students, Service integration through partnerships involving school; civic, counselling, cultural, health, recreation, and other agencies and organizations; and businesses, Service to the community by students, families, and schools (e.g., recycling, art, music, drama, and other activities for seniors or others) and Participation of alumni in school programs for students.

Over the past 50 years, the roles of parents and teachers in the pre-schooler's learning outcomes have changed. In the twentieth century, teachers were perceived as experts and there was no need for parental involvement in their children's education (Porter, 2002). However today, educational theories have consistently shown that parents are collaborative partners of equal status with teachers (Fan and Chen, 2001). Hence, enhancing parental involvement has featured as a central component in major educational policies and reforms worldwide, for example in North America and the United Kingdom, the positive relationship between parental involvement and their pre-schooler's learning outcomes is consistently supported (Mattingly, Prislín, McKenzie, Rodriguez and Kayzar, 2002).

Wendy (1997) categorised parental involvement into three: behavioural, Cognitive/intellectual and personal involvement. Behavioural involvement includes parental participation in activities such as attending school meetings, cognitive/intellectual involvement shows the extent parents expose their children to intellectually stimulating activities e.g. going to the library, while personal involvement is concerned with knowing about and keeping abreast of what is going on with the child at school. Moreover as observed by Desforges and Abouchaar (2003), among the forms parental involvement takes are contact with schools to share information; participation in school events; participation in the work of the school and participation in school governance among others. These submissions support the Epstein's (1995) six types of parental involvement (parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making and collaborating with the community) which are further elaborated by Hatchuel Tabernik and Associates (2004).

In spite of much research on the effects of parental involvement on academic achievement, Epstein and Sanders (2006) assert that many teachers and administrators in USA still see themselves as individual leaders of their classrooms and schools. The study further indicate that to a large extent it is the schools that played a large role in ensuring whether parents participate in their children's education or not (Christenson and Sheridan, 2001). This study further reported that parents' work schedules which conflict with school events, financial and time constraints were the major obstacles to effective communication between teachers and parents.

While the research evidence is less than conclusive, years of practice, wisdom, theory, and related areas of research strongly suggest that parental involvement in children's formal schooling is vital for their academic success and personal development (Howard Family Research Project, 2007; Shumow and Miller, 2001). Also according to the Department of Education (2004) in the United States, studies have shown that students with involved parents are more likely to earn higher grades, attend school regularly, graduate and go on to postsecondary education irrespective of their socio-economic status. These findings concurs with those of Sanders and Sheldon, (2009) who maintained that schools become successful when a strong and positive relationship among students, parents, teachers and the community has been established. However, other studies contradict this fact by showing that there is no connection between parental involvement and children's academic achievement (Bronstein, Ginsberg and Herrera, 2005; cited in Hill & Tyson, 2009). Hence the current study will investigate on the Application of Epstein's theoretical lens to parental involvement in the education of pre-schoolers in Kenya.

In Ghana, the standard of education, especially in the lower primary schools has assumed a downward trend in recent times. The documentary evidence on parental involvement in Ghana is not encouraging. Some of the studies have shown that most parents do not show interest in their children's school work (Casley-Hayford, 2000; Minor, 2006; Pryor and Ampiah, 2003a, 2003b). The revelations from these studies point to the fact that the dismal performance of Ghanaian students could be partly due to parents' neglecting attitude towards the education of their children. This situation calls for the need to encourage parents to actively engage in the education of their children.

In Nigeria, Research suggests that pupils, parents, teachers and head teachers as well as schools benefit from increased parental involvement. As reported by Olsen and Fuller (2010), parental involvement activities that are effectively planned and well implemented resulted in substantial benefits to children, parents, teachers and schools. As for children, they achieved more, regardless of ethnic or racial background, socioeconomic status, or parents' education level. The study further indicated that children of more involved parents were found to have higher self-esteem; more self-disciplined and showed higher aspirations and motivation towards school.

At independence in 1963, the government of Kenya recognized education as a basic right and a powerful tool for national development. Over the years the government has addressed challenges facing the Education sector through commissions, Committees and Task Forces with the sole purpose of providing quality and relevant education to its citizenry at all levels of learning. The Government through Sessional Paper No. 1(2005), committed itself to develop policies that would ensure

accelerated industrial and technological development. In this regard, the introduction of FPE in January 2003 led to significant educational achievements. Enrolments in public primary schools increased significantly from 5.9 million in 2002 to 6.9 million in 2003; representing a Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) of 99% (102% girls; 97% boys). Despite these enrolments, primary education continues to experience a number of challenges, such as overstretched facilities and diminished support by communities because most parents are under the impression that it is the Government’s exclusive responsibility to provide all the necessary resources to support the primary education.

However in Kenya, available studies indicates that a large proportion of primary pupils who enrol in standard one education do not complete the primary cycle within the prescribed eight-year period and a significant number do not complete primary education at all (Cheruiyot, 2005). Out of the total enrolment in standard one, only 47% of girls and 48% of boys complete the primary cycle. Repetition rate is as high as 15% and transition rate is poor especially for girls with only 27% proceeding to secondary level of education (Kathuri, 2005). This scenario has been attributed to, among other factors, lack of parental concern with their children's education or excessive parental control and demands for superior achievement and poor foundation in lower primary schools and pre-schools (Cheruiyot, 2005). In addition, other studies have indicated that parents who show little or no interest in their children's education have children who are frequently absent from school, perform poorly, repeat classes and drop out of school (Gitonga, 1997).

The involvement of parents in the education of their children has attracted a lot of attention over the last three decades, and this subject continues to be of interest to most researchers. Throughout the 1990s, a large number of studies (Bogenschneider, 1997; Eccles, Jacobs, and Harold, 1990; Epstein, 1991, 92; Grolnick, Benjet, Kurowski, and Apostoleris, 1997; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997, Muller, 1998; Schneider and Coleman, 1993; Smith, 1992; Useem, 1992) have contributed to the effects of parental involvement on children’s academic achievement. However limited studies have attempted to investigate on the Application of Epstein’s theoretical lens to parental involvement in the education of pre-schoolers in Kenya, which is the focus of the current study. In Manga sub-county where the study will be done, the available statistics at Nyamira director of education office (2015) show worrying trends of the extent to which parents participated in their children’s learning:

Table 1.1: General parental involvement trends in three divisions in Manga Sub-County

Parental Involvement	Division A			Division B			Division C		
	Total number of parents	Actual number of parents		Total number of parents	Actual number of parents		Total number of parents	Actual number of parents	
		TNO	NO		%	TNO		NO	%
Parenting	1338	347	26	1505	129	9	1163	124	11
Communicating	1338	304	23	1505	108	7	1163	134	12
Volunteering	1338	112	8	1505	170	11	1163	176	13
Learning at home	1338	376	28	1505	254	17	1163	267	23

Source: County Director of Education Office Statistics (Nyamira County, 2015)

To ensure that parents are involved in their children’s learning, studies in many parts of the world indicates that many countries now have legislation to ensure that parents are involved in their children's education more than before (Naidoo, 2005; Friedman, 2011). However, in Kenya there is no such legislation and there are limited studies showing the extent to which the six Types of Parental Involvement parenting, communicating, volunteering, and learning at home, decision making and collaborating with the community affect preschoolers’ education.

1.2 Statement of the Problem:

Growing body of literature suggests that Epstein’s theoretical lens of parental involvement do not have a positive influence on children’s learning and accomplishment in school. For decades the researchers have had inconsistent findings on how and to what extent Epstein’s theoretical lens of parental involvement influences pre-schoolers’ education. To date it is not clear on the part of stakeholders of education which forms of parental involvement has a greater influence on pre-schoolers’ education. Generally, it is not clear how the stakeholders of education view Epstein’s theoretical lens of parental involvement in preschoolers’ education. It is against this backdrop that the current study explored the Perspectives of Preschool lead teachers on application of Epstein’s theoretical lens of Parental involvement in Pre-schoolers education in Kenya.

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1.3 Purpose of the Study:

The purpose of the study was to explore Perspectives of preschool lead teachers on application of Epstein's theoretical lens of Parental involvement in Pre-schoolers education in Kenya

1.4 Objectives of the Study:

The study was guided by the following objective:

To find out the perspectives of pre-school lead teachers on Epstein's theoretical lens of Parental Involvement in preschoolers' education.

1.5 Research Questions:

The study was guided by the following research question :

How do pre-school lead teachers perceive Epstein's theoretical lens of Parental involvement in preschoolers' education?

1.6 Significance of the Study:

The study was significant in the following respects:

The study findings may provide useful information to scholars on extent to which stakeholders perceive Epstein's theoretical lens of parental involvement in pre- Schoolers education. Preschool administrators and teachers may make use of the findings to encourage parents to get involved in their children's education right from pre-school level by introducing school regulations and policies that may ensure that parents participate in their children's educational matters by ensuring that parents sign their children's diary and that home work has been properly done by the child. Policy makers in the Ministry of Education may make use of the findings to make policies that would encourage programs that may enable parents gain knowledge on the importance of their involvement in their children's education, with an aim of improving children's performance in school.

1.7 Scope of the Study:

The study scope was within Manga Sub-County in Nyamira County, Kenya. The study focused on parental involvement as a conjecturer of learning outcomes. The researcher focused on home parenting environment, home to school communication, parental volunteering services and learning at home. The researcher used mixed research method that used both quantitative and qualitative approach using concurrent research design. The study was anchored on Epstein's theory (1987) of parental involvement, its' application on the learning preschoolers.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

The following were the limitations of the study:

- i. The study was purely qualitative in nature; therefore its findings may not be generalized to any other area of study having similar or related title.
- ii. The study was limited to Manga Sub-County in Nyamira County, Kenya and therefore the findings might not be generalized to the entire Nyamira County as well as the entire Kenya. However, since Manga Sub-County is a typical example of areas with parental involvement in pre-schools, the findings will be useful for reference on matters related to the Application of Epstein's theoretical lens to parental involvement in the education of preschoolers in Kenya.
- iii. The illiteracy levels of some parents were a limitation, certain parents were not able to read and write. This limitation was overcome by translating the questionnaire from Ekegusii to English.

1.9 Assumptions of the Study:

- i. That pre-school parents know Epstein's theoretical lens of Parental Involvement in preschoolers' education.
- ii. That pre-school lead teachers have got perspectives on Epstein's theoretical lens of Parental Involvement in preschoolers' education.

1.10 Theoretical framework:

The study adopted the overlapping spheres of influence theory proposed by Epstein (1987). This theory looks at the interrelationship between the school, family, and the community. The connection between schools, families, and communities were observed from different angles and viewpoints (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). This theory is a coordination of sociological, educational, and psychological views on social organizations, and also studies about how educational outcomes are impacted by the environments of the family, school, and community (Epstein, 1987, 1992). Recognizing the interdependency of the key environments or agents that socialize and educate children, one cardinal axiom of this theory is that certain objectives of which pre-schooler's learning outcome is no exception, have the mutual interest of each of these agents or environments and are best attained via their concerted partnership and underpinning. This perspective is represented by three spheres: schools, family and community and their Connection are determined by the attitudes, perspectives, perceptions and practices of the people within each environment (Epstein, 1992).

Epstein (1996) proposed a framework of parental involvement that includes six main types of activities that connect families, schools, and communities. Epstein's framework of six major types of parental involvement is among the most useful tools developed by the field thus far for defining parental involvement practices and linking them with various learning outcomes. This widely accepted framework guides to help educators develop comprehensive family school partnerships. The six types of parental involvement include: parenting (helping families with childrearing and parenting skills), communicating (developing effective home-school communication), volunteering (creating ways that families can become involved in activities at the school), learning at home (supporting learning activities in the home that reinforce school curricula), decision-making (including families as decision-makers through school-sites councils, committees) and collaborating with the community (matching community services with family needs and serving the community (Epstein, 1995). Each type of involvement encompasses a variety of practices to be undertaken by teachers, parents, and students and is theoretically linked with a variety of distinct outcomes for students, teachers, and parents as well but this study will deal with Epstein's theoretical lens of parental involvement (parenting, communicating, volunteering and learning at home, decision making and collaborating with the community).

In line with the above discussed theories-the ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) and the overlapping spheres of influence (Epstein, 1987) about the influence of the Environment in shaping the life of the individual, it is assumed that parental involvement in the education of their children leads to tremendous dividends in the educational achievements of their children. It should be noted that although both theories talk about the development of the child, the theory of overlapping spheres of influence provide a more specific approach to a pre-schooler's learning outcome. According to Epstein (2009) there are many reasons for developing and establishing a partnership between school, family and community. The main reason for such a partnership is to aid students in succeeding at school. Other reasons are, for example, to improve school climate and school programs, to advance parental skills and leadership, to assist families to connect with others in the school and the community, as well as to assist teachers with their work. All these reasons emphasise the importance for parents to play an active role in their children's education and to keep a strong and positive relationship with schools.

In Epstein's opinion, schools, families and community share responsibilities for the socialisation of the child. Therefore, the theory of overlapping spheres of influence posits that the work of the most effective families and schools overlap and they share goals and missions. Although some practices of school and family are conducted separately, there are some important things that need to be done conjointly by these contexts, reflecting the shared responsibilities of parents and educators. Concepts of family-like school and school-like family are used to stress that the family needs to recognize that the child is a learner to whom the importance of school, homework and learning in general needs to be pointed out, while the school is to make every child feel special, accepted and included as it is within the family. Similar principles go also for the community level and it is interaction with both families and schools.

1.11 Conceptual Framework:

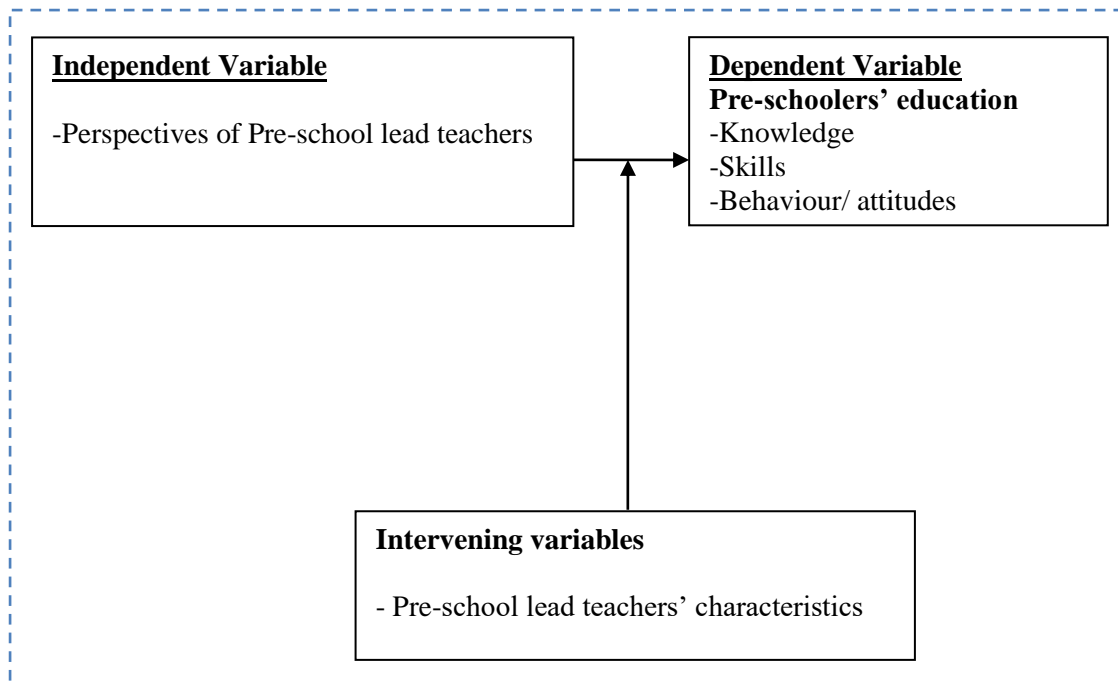


Figure 1.1 Figure Showing Parental Involvement on pre-schoolers learning outcome.

The independent variables are perspectives of pre-school lead teachers while the dependent variable is preschoolers' education which entails knowledge, skills and behaviour and attitudes. Basing the conceptual framework on Epstein's (1987) theoretical model, the framework contains six important factors with regards to parental involvement which includes: parenting, communicating, volunteering, and learning at home, decision making and collaborating with the community. Parenting pertains to helping all families understand the development of both the child and the adolescent. It also helps establishing a supportive home environment for children as pre-schoolers. Communicating refers to how best to design and conduct an effective two-way communication that is school-to-home and home-to-school, about school programs and their children's progress. Volunteering applies to recruiting and organising help and support from parents for school programs and pre-schoolers' activities. Learning at home pertains to providing ideas and information to parents about how they can best assist their children with homework and curricular related decisions and activities. The conceptual framework also shows that there are intervening variables which are perceived to influence the perspectives of Preschool teachers on Epstein's theoretical lens of Parental involvement in the pre-schoolers education. The characteristics include-Gender, educational qualifications, experience of preschool lead teachers.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Perspectives of Preschool lead teachers on Epstein's theoretical lens of parental involvement in preschoolers education:

Parental involvement is perceived as one of the parenting practices that help children's transition from home to formal school environment (Fuller, 2005). Despite the many challenges children face as they join preschool centres, parents have a key role in making this transition less difficult by ensuring continuity between home and school life through parental volunteering (Mulligan, 2005). Research conducted over several decades demonstrates a strong and consistent relationship between parents' involvement in education-related activities and their children's educational attainment (Guskey, Ellender, and Wang, 2006).

Epstein (2009) claims that in order to get parents involved, it is very important to include parents in developing, reviewing and improving school policies that affect students at the school. This will allow families to have some input in decisions that affect their children's education. Finally, it is quite valuable in order to strengthen school programs, family practices

and student learning, to include the cooperation of community businesses, cultural and religious organisations, senior citizen groups and colleges and universities. Some community activities are after school recreation, tutorial programs, health services, cultural events, summer programs and part-time jobs. Epstein claims that if this is well implemented, students, families and schools will increase their knowledge of community resources, and that will help students reach important goals for learning.

In USA, El Nokali, Bachman, and Votruba-Drzal (2010) conducted a study on Parental involvement and children's academic and social development in elementary school. Early Childcare and Youth Development ($N = 1,364$) were used to investigate children's trajectories of academic and social development across 1st, 3rd, and 5th grades. Hierarchical linear modelling was used to examine within- and between-child associations among maternal and teacher reports of parent involvement and children's standardized achievement scores, social skills, and problem behaviours. The study established that parental involvement at school was significantly related to children's school readiness skills. The study also established a moderate effect sizes of parent involvement at school with students' scores on the Applied Problems subscale ($d = 0.36$). Further, stronger parent-school relationships established by involvement at school also were related to children's higher social skills ($d = 0.55$) and fewer problem behaviours ($d = 0.47$), as measured by the Social Skills Rating System.

A study on parental involvement by Brannon (2008) in USA found that parents' participation in activities such as volunteering in the classroom, attending events such as school meetings or assemblies, going on field trips and having parent-teacher conferences, was closely associated with higher reading achievement, lower rates of grade retention, and fewer years of special education. This further revealed that parental involvement was linked with character education in children which results in pupils attaining higher academic achievement, more positive attitudes about homework, and improved perceptions of their own competence.

Fan and Williams (2010) study in USA and UK on parental involvement on pupils' achievement. The study found that parental involvement leads to teachers having better relationships with parents and pupils, fewer behavioural problems, a reduced workload and a more positive attitude towards teaching. This kind of parental involvement, teachers get support and appreciation from parents, broaden their perspectives and increase their sensitivity to varied parent circumstances, gain knowledge and understanding of children's homes, families and out-of-school activities. Teachers also receive higher ratings from parents, in other words, teachers who work at improving parental involvement are considered better teachers than those who remain cut off from the families of the pupils that they teach.

Bridgemohan (2005), on the other hand, observes that where parental involvement programs are established in early childhood education programs, the benefits are apparent throughout the child's school career and include higher learner achievement, lower dropout rates and a decline in behavioural problems, academic initiative and persistence. These findings are supported by Buchman (2000) who also observe that parent involvement in lower grades is stronger and more comprehensive than involvement in the middle grades which implies that parents of children in the middle grades receive less information and guidance precisely when they need it most in order to understand the school subjects and schedules for their children.

Emerson, Fear Fox and Sanders (2012) conducted a study in Australia on parental engagement in learning and schooling. The study found that parent involvement opportunities at the preschool could include volunteering on site preschool; attending excursions and events; as a representative on the preschool committee or School Board, or even sharing a skill (gardening, cooking, and language). There are many ways in which families and parents can be involved in their child's preschool education. Further finding showed an improved learning outcomes were enhanced when parents and school staff work together to support an effective learning environment in both home and the school. Emerson et al study only used quantitative approach and collected data using only self-administered questionnaires on contrary the current study involved both qualitative and quantitative methods. The study also did collect data using questionnaires, interviews and documentary analysis.

In Alexandria, Australia Centre for Public Education (2011) conducted a study on how parent involvement affects student achievement. The study was a longitudinal study of 39 schools identified for the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS), a group of more than 1,000 schools that have made school-community partnerships a priority. The study found that volunteering in school ranges from offering opportunities for parents to visit their child's school to finding ways to

recruit and train them to work in the school or classroom. In addition, schools that conducted a greater total number of attendance-focused activities were more likely to decrease the percentage of students who missed twenty or more days of school each year. The NNPS schools posted higher attendance rates. "Even after the strong effects of prior rates of absenteeism were accounted for, communicating with families about attendance, celebrating good attendance with students and families, and connecting chronically absent students with community mentors measurably reduced students' chronic absenteeism from one year to the next. The study was based on longitudinal survey study's individuals or entities for a long time. The current study on the other hand was a mixed method approach and was conducted in one month's time using questionnaires, interview schedule and documentary analysis to collect data.

In Canadian, Adams and Trost (2005) conducted a study on parental involvement and children's school academic achievement. The participants in the study were 110 fifth-grade (47 boys and 63 girls) and 120 sixth-grade (63 boys and 58 girls) children sampled from four elementary schools in a small Canadian city. The data was collected through the use of questionnaires however the current study employed questionnaires, interview schedule and document analysis to gather data. The researchers used path analytical techniques and an ecological framework to examine the association between the variables. Contrary the current study employed concurrent research design to analyse data. The results indicated that fathers' academic pressure was predictive of lower academic achievement, whereas, mothers' encouragement and support predicated higher achievement.

Mitchell, (2012) conducted a one-year research and professional development project aimed at supporting ways in which teachers and parents work together to enhance children's learning and wellbeing in New Zealand early childhood services settings. The research involved case studies in three education and care centres and three kindergartens. It explored the professional development process, the perceptions of teachers and parents' involvement and the process of change over the course of the year, and factors that helped or hindered teacher and parent participation in various school activities. The study established a positive relationship between parental involvement and children's wellbeing. This study differs with the current study in that it was a case study involving only parents. Conversely the current study involved pre-school parents, ECDE lead teachers, head teachers and ECDE divisional Coordinators.

Guo (2005) did a study in New Zealand to examined the views of a small number of Asian immigrant parents and New Zealand early childhood teachers about parent-teacher partnerships in children's early education and care. The study was conducted with six Asian immigrant families and 26 early childhood teachers. It sought parental views on parents and teachers working with each other for the benefit of children's learning. All participants were sampled from the Auckland region. Two of the six Asian immigrant families came to NZ from mainland China and one was from Taiwan. Parents were interviewed in their own homes using an unstructured interview format. The parents were asked what role they considered they should play in their child's early childhood education and how they felt about working with New Zealand early childhood teachers. The teachers were asked about their opinions on the same topic. The interviews with the three Chinese parents showed that they did not want to play an active role for various reasons. Their typical responses were: they believed it was the teacher's job to take care of their children; they did not think their help would be of any use; and they did not approach the teacher because they were afraid of making mistakes and being thought silly.

Zhang (2010) did a study in Taiwan to distinguish the influence of father and mother's involvement on adolescent academic achievement. The study was done on a sample drawn from Taiwan Education Panel Survey and consisted of 8108 adolescents. Father and mother's involvement related to academic achievement was measured by four types of involvement: career plan discussion, listening to adolescent thinking, monitoring academic progress and participation in school activities. The result indicated that mothers were more involved than fathers in their children's education. Mother's involvement had more predictive power of adolescent academic achievement, unlike the current study that was conducted among pre-schoolers.

In South Africa, Lemmer (2000) conducted a study to establish teachers' experiences in South African schools in relation to parental involvement using Epstein's model of family-school partnerships. The study findings indicated a positive association between parents' attendance and their children's school grades as due to their actively demonstrating that they value education and their gaining a better understanding of the school situation. The study further indicated that having some parents at the school reversed poor trends in school, it restores the culture of teaching and learning in school, draws parents into the life of the school, and in this way, teachers' professionalism is strengthened. Moreover, it positively

influences teachers' interactions with other parents as the volunteers demonstrate parents' willingness to help, and thus teachers were encouraged to ask other parents to help their children with home-based learning activities. At the same time, Lemmer (2000) finally reported that pupils whose parents volunteered on school grounds had lower incidents of truancy and tardiness, and had slightly higher grades if their parents even simply attended events such as drama and athletics. The research findings differ from the present study in that it focused on the association between parents' involvement using Epstein's model while the current study sort to establish the application of Epstein's theoretical lens on parental involvement on the education of pre-schoolers in Kenya.

In Kenya, Ang'ienda (2013) conducted a study where one of the objectives was to investigate the influence of parental volunteering on children's learning process. The study adopted descriptive survey research design where the target population for the study was composed of 236 administrators (head teachers and deputy head teachers). Questionnaires were used to collect data. Descriptive statistical components such as measures of central tendencies and dispersions were used to analyse the data. The study established that about 78.9% of parents of the pupils who frequently volunteered performed good and 5.3% performed excellent in their class work. These percentages were relatively higher than those of which their parents never or rarely volunteered. This is an indication that parental volunteering greatly influenced the children's learning outcome. When parents volunteer to participate in school activities, the children perform well. However, the study did not establish the extent to which parental volunteering influence children's learning outcomes using interviews and documentary analysis.

Nzau (2015) conducted a study to establish the influence of parental involvement on pupils KCPE performance in public primary schools in Kanziko zone, Kitui county, Kenya. One of the specific objectives was to determine the relationship between the extent to which parents' attendance to school functions and their children's learning outcomes. The research adopted a descriptive survey design. A sample of 90 parents, 55 teachers and 152 pupils were selected through simple random sampling. The study findings indicated that the lack of involvement through attending school function was one of the major factors that hindered the efforts by teachers to improve the children's performance in the KCPE examination. However this study did not investigate into the extent in which this type of parental involvement influences pre-school children's education learning outcomes which the present study sought to establish.

In Kenya, Manasi, Ndiku, Sang and Ejakait (2014) conducted a study to establish the influence of parental involvement in the provision of teaching - learning resources in primary schools and educational outcomes. A descriptive survey research design was employed unlike the current study which adopted mixed method approach. Simple random sampling was used to select thirty schools. Proportionate random sampling was also used to select one hundred and ninety two teachers and two hundred and eighty pupils while purposive sampling was used to select thirty head teachers and parents who served as respondents. Data was collected using questionnaires, semi- structured interviews schedules and document analysis.

Data was analysed using Microsoft excel software. Quantitative data was analysed using mean, percentages and frequencies and qualitative data was reported directly. Pearson correlation coefficient and regression coefficients were used to measure the degree of relationship. Statistical tests were done at $\alpha=0.05$. The study revealed low parental involvement in provision of teaching and learning resources. It was recommended that parents should be advised to support schools so as to realize improved educational outcomes.

Parental involvement in early childhood education is important in a number of ways. Across a range of studies conducted in various parts of the world have come with a strong conclusion that parental involvement in child and adolescent education generally benefits children's learning and school success (Mulligan, 2005; Mitchell, Haggerty, Hampton, & Pairman, 2006; Morrison, 2006). However, most of the review studies have not based their findings on Epstein typology. Hence the current study endeavoured to address the four levels of parental involvements and in particular in the current objective, located and reviewed the various ways parental volunteering improves pre-schoolers' learning outcomes.

Existing Gaps in the Literature review:

There is ample evidence that Parental involvement in the learning activities at home has been identified as one of the most productive ways of promoting and enhancing the educational achievement of children (Muindi, 2010). More recent reviewed studies show that parent/family involvement at home and school has significant effect on children's learning (Jeffries, 2012). However, studies done in Kenya, Africa, and other parts of the world on the influence of parental

involvement on academic achievement of children reveal inconsistent findings about the extent to which parental involvement predicts academic achievement. Owing to these shortcomings, there is need for a study to ascertain these contradicting findings.

While there is a wealth of research and literature available on parent involvement/engagement in recent years, there are still areas of emphases in which we have limited knowledge. There is limited amount of research and literature situated in the Kenyan context. While the predominantly American and developed country's literature in the field is of great benefit, it reflects a context quite different from Kenyan's. Hence the current study attempted to provide literature and findings that may help in the development of policies and practices in the Kenyan situation that will reflect the children, families, schools and communities in the local environment.

A second significant gap is the limited studies that examine parental engagement through the eyes of parents, teachers and children in pre-schools rather than through the eyes of educators. So much of the research and literature that is available gives educators' accounts and perceptions of the school landscape, and of parents' position in relation to their involvement in their children's academic achievement (Nermeen, Heather, and Elizabeth, 2010). It tends to be research on parents, rather than research with parents, teachers and children especially during the formative years of a child's development. What might be learned if we heard parents' stories of their children's schooling experiences and their stories of their own experiences as parents in relation to the school landscape? What might become fore grounded from this research that is currently not being attended to in the literature or in the field?

Another gap in the field of parental involvement surrounds the benefits of parental engagement to parents, learners and teachers basing the study on Epstein's (1995) theoretical model that contains six important factors with regards to parental involvement which includes: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making and collaborating with the community. There are limited studies done to establish what these benefits might be, how they might occur, or how parents, families, and communities may be strengthened by them which the current study attempts to establish.

Given the available literature focus on the advantages of school, family, and community connections, developing trusting relationships, sharing power with parents and community members, working with diverse families, and connecting with community resources (Harper and Pelletier, 2010; Hinojosa (2014)). There was need to have a study in a broader context examining the influence of parental involvement as a predictor of learning outcomes in pre-schools in Manga Sub-County, Kenya.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design:

A research design is the structure, scheme, outline or plan that is used to generate answers to research problems (Orodho, 2003). It provides a structure that shows how various parts of research project work together in addressing the central research questions. In addressing the research questions, the study adopted concurrent triangulation research design. Concurrent mixed methods procedures involved converging or merging quantitative and qualitative data in order to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem. In this design, the researcher collected both qualitative and quantitative data at the same time and then integrated the information in the interpretation of the overall results (Denscombe 2008; Creswell 2009; Creswell and zhang 2009; Creswell and Plano Clark 2011).

The combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches occurred at different stages of the research process, such as formulation of research questions, data collection and data analysis (Bryman 2006; Teddlie and Tashakkori 2009; Creswell and Plano Clark 2011). This approach to research enabled the study to gather adequate information that provided a better understanding of a research problem and answering the entire research questions than using either qualitative or quantitative research approach alone (Creswell and Plano Clark 2011). This design is more appropriate because it increases the overall strength of a study by enhancing the validity and trustworthy of data collected (Denscombe 2010). In handling qualitative data, the design has the capacity of collecting data concerning the current status of the problem in which the researcher has no direct control of the independent variables because the manifestation had already occurred (Denscombe 2008).

The design was also more appropriate because it allowed the researcher to gather information from a large number of cases through questionnaires and interviews. With quantitative data, the design allows for the study to discover the predictive relationship and the degree of association among variables (Creswell and Zhang 2009). The choice of the design was based on its ability to explore the relationships among variables that could not be manipulated experimentally (Orodho, 2009). Therefore it was more suitable because the study attempted to examine parental involvement in the education of Pre-schoolers in Kenya. Figure 2 below shows how the researcher collected and analysed data using convergent parallel design.

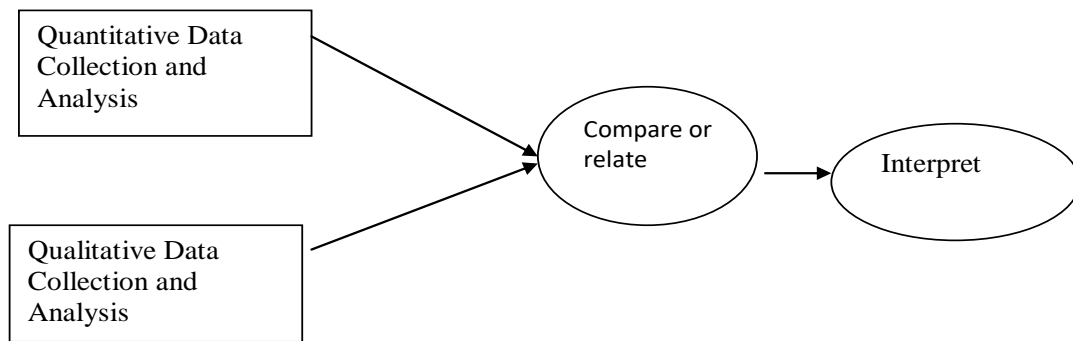


Figure 2: Convergent parallel designs (diagram)

Convergent parallel design was best used to develop more complete understanding of the research problem by obtaining different but complementary data for validation purposes.

3.2 The Locale of the Study:

This research study was conducted out in Manga Sub-County, Nyamira County, Kenya. According to Manga Sub-County, Nyamira County education office, statistics on parental involvement on their pre-schoolers’ education did show that only 15.7% were involved in pre-schoolers’ education (SCDE, 2015). This showed a worrying trend on the extent to which parents in Manga Sub-County participated in their children’s learning. Manga sub-county was curved out of Masaba Sub-County in 2008. The sub-county covers an approximate area of 115.5 square Kilometres with a population of 105,850, indicating high population density. The sub-county borders Nyamira to the East, Masaba North to the North, Kisii Central to the north-west and Marani to the West. It has its headquarters at the Manga shopping centre .Manga sub-county has three divisions namely Kemera, Magombo and Manga. The sub-county has 15 locations and 23 sub-locations. The population of the people in the county mostly are the Abagusii people and other communities are also living there. The sub-county lies at the latitude -0⁰s, 45⁰ s and longitude 35⁰E, 00 E(Appendix M). Levels of poverty are high where children engage in tea picking to supplement family income. Due to this poverty index and involvement of children in various forms of child labour, the access to education is consequently hampered. It is against this background information that Manga sub-county was selected for this study.

The economic mainstay for Manga sub-county is agriculture, livestock and poultry keeping. Therefore, 70% of the population is employed in agricultural activities with very low incomes. Despite the fact that most households in the sub-county depend on agriculture as the main source of livelihood, the sector faces a number of constraints which, unless removed will continue to work against poverty reduction efforts. Some of these include the high incidences of HIV/AIDS which has led to the loss of life and depletion and diversion of badly needed family incomes, un-economical subdivision of land due to the high population pressure, low agricultural productivity, unaffordable input prices that discourage farmers from investing in agriculture and unstable cash crop prices. This situation is further aggravated by landlessness among women and youth, and mismanagement and near collapse of cooperative societies especially coffee and pyrethrum and poor agricultural produce marketing.

The low level of human resource development is one of the causes of poverty in the sub-county. For most people, the cost of education is too high therefore the level of literacy is quite low. This coupled with the fact that further education and training are hampered by the limited number of institutions and low quality of education acquired from them, means that the population particularly the labour force is not well equipped to compete effectively in the local job market and therefore the ability to secure remunerative jobs or other income generating opportunities (GDP, 2002-2008).

3.3 Target Population:

A population refers to an entire group of individuals, events or objects having a common observable characteristic (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). The units of analysis for this study were 65 Public Pre-schools, 65 Preschool lead teachers and 6 Community Opinion Leaders.

3.4 Sample size and Sampling procedures:

3.4.1 Sample size:

Sampling is the procedure a researcher uses to gather people, places or things to study. It is the process of selecting a number of individuals or objects from a population such that the selected group contains elements representative of the characteristics found in the entire group (Orodho and Kombo, 2002). Kothari (2006) asserts that sample size should neither be excessively large nor too small. It should be optimum. Budgetary constraints must invariably be taken into consideration when a sample size is decided. Table 3.1 shows how the sample size was arrived at.

Table 3.1: Study Population, Accessible population and Sample

Respondents	Study Population	Accessible population	sample	%
Preschool lead teachers	65	65	56	86.15%
Community opinion leaders	6	6	6	100.0%
Total	71	71	62	87.32 %

The units of analysis were 65 Public Pre-schools. Therefore, the study populations were 65 preschool lead teachers and 6 community opinion leaders. The accessible study populations were 65 preschool lead teachers and 6 community opinion leaders. Using the accessible population and with reference to Krejcie and Morgan (1970), the following sample sizes were selected: 56 preschool lead teachers and 6 community opinion leaders. Preschool lead teachers were selected by stratified random sampling technique and 6 Community opinion leaders were picked out by saturated random sampling and purposive sampling techniques.

3.4.2 Sampling techniques:

Stratified random sampling technique was applied where the targeted population was large with similar characteristics (Orodho, 2005). Each individual was chosen randomly by and entirely by chance such that each individual had an equal probability of being chosen at any stage during the sampling process. Besides, the technique was adopted for the study because it gave every respondent an equal chance of being selected and eliminated biasness. Purposive sampling technique is a form of non-probability sampling in which decisions concerning the individuals to be included in the sample are taken by the researcher based upon a variety of criteria which may include specialist knowledge of the research issue, or capacity and willingness' to participate in the research (Orodho, 2005). This technique is applicable to the present study because the researcher strongly believed that the respondents had the desired information related to the study.

3.5 Data Collection Methods:

The study employed in-depth interview Guide and Questionnaires to collect data.

3.5.1 In-depth interview guide:

Interviews involve conversations that were used to gain personal information, knowledge, attitudes or opinions from a list of prepared questions asked to each participant in the same manner. In-depth interview were appropriate for the study because the language level of the respondents can be adjusted, interviewer may answer questions and make clarifications, the researcher would prompt and probe deeper into the given situation, the interviewer was able to probe or ask more detailed questions situations and not adhere only to the interview guide and the researcher could explain or rephrase the questions if respondents were unclear about the questions. Five in-depth interviews were conducted namely: In-depth Interview for preschool lead teachers (IIFPSLTs), In-depth Interview for ECDE divisional coordinators (IIFECDECs), In-depth Interview for denominational Leader (IIFDL), In-depth Interview for County women representative (IIFCWR) and In-depth Interview for Area Chief (IIFAC).

3.5.1.1 In-depth Interview for preschool lead teachers (IIFPSLTs):

A face to face IIFPSLTs was conducted to solicit responses from each of the 7 preschool lead teachers. For purposes of collection of data, preschool lead teachers were identified as PLT1, PLT2.....PLT7. A few guiding questions covering the objectives of the study formed the basis of the conversation. They were chosen purposively for the study because they had the most long term experience in teaching preschoolers and were strongly believed to be able to give views on how Epstein's theoretical lens of parental involvement had been applied in preschoolers education. The questions had a common format, which made it easier to be focus, analyze, code and compare data. The interview was carried in the respective places preferred by the respondents and took between 30 minutes to an hour. Recording of the conversation was done by jotting down the key points of the conversation and the same was transcribed the same day to avoid forgetfulness.

3.5.1.2 In-depth Interview for ECDE divisional coordinators (IIFECDECs):

Face to face IIFECDECs was done to solicit responses from each of the 3 respondents. For purposes of collecting data, ECDE divisional Coordinators were identified as ECDEDC1, ECDEDC2 and ECDEDC3 respectively. A few guiding questions covering the objectives of the study formed the basis of the conversation. They were purposely selected into the study because they were directly involved in the management of quality issues at school level especially the implementation of inclusive education as envisioned by the Government. In-depth interview was more appropriate for the study because the researcher has control over the topics. The questions had a common format, which made it easier to be focus, analyze, code and compare data. The interview was carried in the respective places preferred by the respondents and took between 30 minutes to an hour. Recording of the conversation was done by jotting down the key points of the conversation and the same was transcribed the same day to avoid forgetfulness.

3.5.1.3 In-depth Interview for denominational Leader (IIFDL):

A face to face IIFDL was done to solicit responses from the main denomination in the area. A few guiding questions covering the objectives of the study formed the basis of the conversation. The denominational leader (DL) with help of other school administrators ensure good upbringing of the learners and make certain that learners develop holistically. The leader was chosen purposively for the study to represent the community since they were strongly believed to be able to give views on how Epstein's theory of parental involvement in the education of preschoolers. In-depth interview was more appropriate for the study because the researcher has control over the topics. The questions had a common format, which made it easier to be focus, analyze, code and compare data. The interview was carried in the respective office of the denominational leader and took between 30 minutes to an hour. Recording of the conversation was done by jotting down the key points of the conversation and the same was transcribed the same day to avoid forgetfulness.

3.5.1.4 In-depth Interview for County women representative (IIFCWR):

A face to face IIFCWR was done to solicit responses from the county women representative. A few guiding questions covering the objectives of the study formed the basis of the conversation. The County women representative (CWR) with help of other school administrators ensure good upbringing of the learners and make certain that learners develop holistically. The leader was chosen purposively for the study to represent the community since they were strongly believed to be able to give views on how Epstein's theory of parental involvement in the education of preschoolers. In-depth interview was more appropriate for the study because the researcher has control over the topics. The questions had a common format, which made it easier to be focus, analyze, code and compare data. The interview was carried in the respective office of the women representative at county and took between 30 minutes to an hour. Recording of the conversation was done by jotting down the key points of the conversation and the same was transcribed the same day to avoid forgetfulness.

3.5.1.5 In-depth Interview for Area Chief (IIFAC):

A face to face IIFAC was done to solicit responses from the senior most chief in Manga sub-county. A few guiding questions covering the objectives of the study formed the basis of the conversation. The area chief (AC) with help of other school administrators ensure good upbringing of the learners and make certain that learners develop holistically. The leader was chosen purposively for the study to represent the community since they were strongly believed to be able to

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give views on how Epstein's theory of parental involvement in the education of preschoolers. In-depth interview was more appropriate for the study because the researcher has control over the topics. The questions had a common format, which made it easier to be focus, analyze, code and compare data. The interview was carried in the respective office of the area chief and it took between 30 minutes to an hour. Recording of the conversation was done by jotting down the key points of the conversation and the same was transcribed the same day to avoid forgetfulness.

3.5.2 Questionnaires for Preschool Lead Teachers (QFPLTs):

The study employed self-completion questionnaires to solicit information on perspectives of stakeholders on Epstein's theoretical lens of parental involvement in pre-schoolers education. Questionnaires had a likert scale format and consisted of both open and closed ended questions. According to Borg and Gall (1983) questionnaires are the most efficient way of reaching many respondents in the shortest time possible, therefore were ideal for this study since it involved many respondents. Questionnaire were also appropriate for the study because they generated significant facts and better understanding of the extent to which parents got involved in their children's education (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005b). The structured closed items were accompanied by appropriate but limited options from which the respondents selected the responses to describe different phenomenon of the study. The open-ended questions also allowed the respondent to give details freely without any prompting.

The questionnaire was selected based on its quality of ensuring anonymity and hence the respondent's willingness to freely provide responses. Questionnaire were divided into two sections, A and B. Section A captured the demographic characteristics of respondents while section B dwelled on the main research questions of the study.

QFPLT) was used to collect data from 49 pre-school lead teachers. QFPLTs were administered by the researcher himself on the day that was requested for the exercise during appointment day. The exercise took place in the respective offices of the preschool lead teachers. Questionnaires were collected on the same day of administration and with the exceptional cases where a respondent requested to fill them in later on. Generally, respondents were given less than two weeks to fill in the questionnaire

3.6 Validity of Research Instruments:

Validity of research instrument refers to the extent to which a test or instrument measures what it is intended or supposed to measure (Mbwesa, 2006). This study adopted the triangulation approach so as to measure the validity of the instruments. Triangulation is a powerful way of demonstrating concurrent validity in both qualitative and quantitative research (Campbell and Fiske 1959). In other words, the study used multiple methods of data collection: interviews, questionnaires as well as document analysis. By so doing, areas that had been overlooked by one method was strengthened and checked by the other.

The cross-checking of data through multiple method approach made the data collected valid. This is in line with Creswell (2009) who contends that the use of multi-model technique to data collection averts the possibility of having invalid and unreliable data. To ensure that the data that gathered measures what the study purported to measure, the research study further adopted content validity. Here the research instrument was scrutinised by the two supervisors to assert that the instrument logically appeared to reflect accurately what it purported to measure and covered what it was intended to cover (Mbwesa, 2006). The two supervisors read through the questions that were used in the study. The ones that were not correct were rephrased and others modified. This helped the researcher to ensure that there was content validity of the instruments.

3.7 Reliability of Research Instruments:

Reliability according to Gall and Borg, (2007) refers to the degree to which similar results would be arrived at by other researchers if they used the same procedures.

3.7.1 Reliability of Quantitative data:

Reliability of the instrument was tested during the piloting stage. Seven preschoolers were involved in the piloting exercise that lasted two weeks. These preschoolers were excluded from the main study. It included, 7 head teachers of preschools, 7 pre-school lead teachers, 35 pre-school parents and 1 community opinion leader. According to Krejcie and

Morgan (1970) a sample should be in proportion to the target population (Appendix M). The questionnaire was again given to the same parents, preschool lead teachers and the coordinator after one week. The composite scores on parental involvement and pre-school pupils' learning outcome was computed and the scores in the two sets was correlated using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient. The formula that was used is shown:

$$r = \frac{N\sum xy - \sum x \sum y}{\sqrt{[N\sum x^2 - (\sum x)^2][N\sum y^2 - (\sum y)^2]}}$$

Where

r	=	Pearson's coefficient or correlation coefficient
N	=	the number of respondents completing the questionnaire
x	=	the scores of the first administration
y	=	the scores of second administration after one week.

Table 3.3 shows the items that were deleted and the ones that were retained to improve the reliability of the scales, with the corresponding optimal values of Cronbach's alpha as a measure of internal consistency.

The reliability coefficients for QFPLTs was 0.69. This means that the instrument was reliable for use in the actual study. This results were almost in line with what Roscoe, 1975; Adams and Schravel, 1985; Best, 1989; Borg and Gall, 1996; Best and Khan, 2004; Uma Sakaran, 2007; Oso and Onen, 2009 indicated that a reliability coefficient should be compared against a threshold of $r=0.7$ which was the coefficient for testing reliability. Where the individual figures realized in some of the scales were below the threshold of 0.7, the overall instrument had a reliability coefficient of 0.726 thus the instrument was considered reliable. However, Nunnaly (1978) indicated that although 0.7 is the accepted reliability coefficient, lower thresholds are sometimes used in literature (Watundu, Musa and Mukyasi, 2011). Pallant (2007) confirms the use of alpha less than the threshold of 0.7 when the items in the scale are less than 10 but suggests using inter-item correlations as a measure of internal consistency.

Briggs and cheek (1986) and Pallant (2007) support figures below the threshold of 0.7 in psychometric studies with inter-mean correlations of 0.2 and 0.4 considered as acceptable. Bonnet (2003) confirms that coefficient alpha may be imprecise when sample sizes are relatively small. The results in this study showed an improved alpha after deletion of some items as specified in Table 3.3 of the reliability of the instruments. This ensured that internal consistency was achieved.

3.7.2 Trustworthiness of qualitative data:

Validity and reliability of qualitative data was ascertained through Lincoln and Guba (1985) qualitative paradigm: Credibility; Transferability; dependability; and conformability.

Credibility

The goal of internal validity or credibility is to show that the study was conducted in a manner as to ensure that the participants were accurately identified and described. The credibility of the study will be achieved by:

- Collecting data over a long period of time (3 months) to enable a researcher to overcome his biases and perceptions
- The researcher checked with informants whether the conclusions and interpretations will be accurate.
- The researcher recorded data mechanically through audio-tapes.

Transferability:

External validity or transferability is the extent to which results of the study will be generalized to the population from which the sample was drawn or other similar contexts. Transferability of the study was achieved through:

- Providing a detailed accurate focus of the study including the conceptual framework.
- Providing a description of the methodology.
- Describing data collection and analysis methods.

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Dependability:

Dependability or external reliability refers to the extent to which a study can be replicated. It is the degree to which a procedure yields the same results each time and in each way it is measured. The researcher took the following measures to ensure the dependability of the results:

- a. Provide a detailed description of the process of inquiring to induce the methodological steps
- b. Provide products of the research process through data presentation, interpretation and recommendations
- c. Provide an audit trail including the audiotapes field notes and interview transcripts.

Conformability:

Conformability, objectivity or internal reliability is the situation in which two or more people perceive the same meaning from the same categories (Field, 1980). The main concern is that the researcher develops meanings and categories not based on his/her own bias, but seen in the data by others. It was achieved by:

- a. Working with well trained research assistants if need be to ensure that they perceive the same meanings from the data (Lecompte and Preissle, 1993).
- b. Discussing and sharing meanings, categories that emerge from the study with his /her colleagues to determine if they perceive the same meanings
- c. Publishing the thesis in a journal to be scrutinized by experts.

3.8 Data Collection Procedures:

The researcher first got introductory letter to carry out the study from the Director of Post Graduate Studies of Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology which enabled him to apply for a research permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation. This permit enabled the researcher to get permission from the County Commissioner and the Director of Education Nyamira County and the District Education Officer in Manga sub-county to carry out the study in the area. Respondents were informed on the importance of the study and were assured both verbally and in written form of confidential treatment of information provided.

3.9 Data Analysis:

Data analysis process involved summarizing large quantities of raw data, categorizing, rearranging and ordering data. This was started by editing the data collected so that what had little relevance was ignored (Mbwesa, 2006). The study had quantitative and qualitative data. Then the data was organized according to the objectives that guided the study.

3.9.1 Quantitative data analysis:

Quantitative data was first coded and entered into the computer for analysis using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22.0. Quantitative data analysis was mainly descriptive statistics in form of frequency counts, percentages and mean. The purpose of descriptive statistics was that it enabled the researcher to meaningfully describe a distribution of scores or measurements using a few indices (Mugenda and Mugenda 2010). This enabled the researcher to transform large groups of data into a more manageable form that was easy to understand and interpret (Mbwesa 2006).

3.10 Qualitative Data Analysis:

Qualitative data involved a quick impressionistic summary that ushered in thematic analysis. Qualitative data was reflectively analysed starting from the time it was collected in the actual field (Creswell, 2009; Gall *et al.*, 2007; Maxwell, 2005). This enabled the researcher to discover important sources and information that may be overlooked in the design. This was achieved in three ways: Having consultative meetings or sessions with respondents and supervisors, having field note summaries and having data summary sheets (Drew, Hardman & Hosp, 2008). The recorded interviews were transcribed and notes were read and analysed. Field notes were analysed and interpreted in readiness for coding in relation to the answers of the structured questions.

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Creswell (2009) defines coding as, "...the process of organizing the material into chunks or segments of texts before bringing meaning to information...segmenting sentences...or images into categories..." Transcripts were read carefully. They were then coded into themes in relation to the research questions and information collected (Gerstenfeld and Berger, 2011). Then a list of all topics was made and sorted according to similarities and differences using highlighters of colours. The topics were later abbreviated as codes and the codes written near the related text in word document. Then these topics were turned into categories – major topics, unique topics, leftovers and emerging themes. Finally, the information assembled according to category and a preliminary analysis was made (adapted from Creswell, 2009). The categories were developed from both the data and research questions based on theory and determined at the formulation of the research instrument. The sub-themes were mostly developed from the data. The data from questionnaires, interviews and document analysis were also sorted according to themes.

Above all, the overlapping spheres of influence theory proposed by Epstein (1987) was used as the basis for analysing and for discussing the findings and chatting possible interventions for the future. Therefore, interpretational analysis largely examined carefully so as to find constructs, themes and patterns that were useful in understanding the phenomenon under study. Above all, the researcher tried by all means to make sense of the meanings that the respondents attached to the phenomenon just like argued by Cohen et al., (2007). This was a challenging task but through reading books and consulting the two supervisors, a meaningful analysis was made.

The study also 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 analysing 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 is not grounded in any particular theoretical framework and can hence be applied across a broad range of qualitative approaches, making it flexible. In carrying out thematic analysis, the study followed suggested procedures to ensure rigor in data analysis which is grouped in six phases as presented in Table 3.3

Table 3.3: 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	On-going 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

Extracted from Braun and Clarke (2006)

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Tables 3.4 and 3.5 show the themes and codes, verbatim quotation, themes and codes on home-to-school communications and pre-schoolers' education reflective on the four objectives.

Table 3.4: Verbatim Quotation, Themes and codes on parenting environment and pre-schoolers' learning outcomes

Themes/ Subthemes	Extracts from the interviews
Parent-child dialogue	<i>Parent involvement in a child's education is consistently and positively influences a child's academic performance. When a parent discusses with the child on his/her academic performance, the parent is able to find out areas of weakness that needs adjustments [PFGD1] When talking to the child, the parents learn many things about the child, the child open up about his/her academic progress and this help the parent to know how to come in, when assisting the child for good academic performance. Therefore, there should be good rapport and relationship between the parent and the child to permit free talking between the two [PSLT, 5]</i>
Parental emotional support	<i>Parents should be encouraged to provide peaceful home environment for their children; they should talk, discuss and deliberate on the school matters with their children. In doing this, they are able to find out how their children socialize in school including whom they interact with. This will also help the parent to know their children better [PFGD 10].</i>
Parental guidance	<i>We as parents have the duty to set rules and provide good parenting style for our children. Notwithstanding strictness, children should always be guided by rules to keep their behaviour and discipline in check. This will always make them be alert and concerned with their environment and in the long run, will have a positive influence on their academic performance [PFGD 8].</i>
Parental physical involvement	<i>Raising of the child to a responsible member of the society is not only a responsibility of the teacher but also for the parents, especially when the child is at home. To this, they are able to monitor the child's behaviour and provide correct punitive or corrective measure in case of child's indiscipline behaviour [PSLT 6].</i>

Table 3.5: Verbatim Quotation, Themes and codes on Home-to-School communications and pre-schoolers' Learning Outcomes

Themes/ Subthemes	Extracts from the interviews
Parental positive participation	<i>Many parents understand the need to keep their children in school and so would not wait for our call to remind them of their responsibility of fee payment. This has really helped us in planning and running of our operations and in the end, the bigger beneficiary is the child would always be in school for good academic performance [PSLT, 5]</i>
Attending PA meetings	<i>Most of the parents came for the PA meetings and to feel part of the school operations. In doing this, they are able to monitor what takes place in the school and check the academic performance of the child" [ECDECI]</i>
Monitoring pupils' class work	<i>I more often than not call my child's teacher to check on the academic performance of the child, the teacher is more willing to disclose the academic progress of the child and because of this we are able to discuss with the teacher on how to help the child [Focus Group Discussion 1]</i>
Monitoring pupils' social development	<i>We like being asked by the parents on child's social development, inquiring on matters concerning his or her interactions and the friends that the child socialises with. This would give us easy time in monitoring and checking the child behaviour and discuss with the parents on how to correct the child in case of indiscipline issues [PSLT, 6]</i>
Provision of solution to a child's developmental challenges	<i>Parents and teachers are two of the most important contributors to a student's educational success. When parents and teachers communicate well with one another, they are able to tackle the learner's weaknesses and support him/her learning together. As such, communication between home and school is vital [PSLT, 2].</i>
Parent-teacher updates	<i>We like parents who update us on the child's activities while at home especially when the school break for holidays because we will be able to monitor the child's behaviour while away from us. This is very crucial for the child's holistic development. [PSLT 2]</i>

<p>Teacher-parent good rapport</p>	<p><i>“Good communication and good rapport between the parent and the teachers creates a good atmosphere for learners to achieve well in academics. Parents that visit their children’s schools for a one on one talk with the teacher on education welfare of their children is able to identify the weak areas in parental upbringing and make adjustment for good academic performance” [PSLT, 4]</i></p> <p><i>‘Parents who communicate regularly with teachers are able to understand the problems their children face in various subjects and are in a position to find the best ways to help their children which enhances their overall performance’ [ECDEC 2]</i></p>
<p>School visit</p>	<p><i>“When the parents visit a school for a face to face talk, he or she is able to see for him or herself the progress of their children and will make a decision on the best way to relate with the learner and collaborate with the teacher for good academic outcome of the learner. Although, there are some mode of communication that may not have much effect on academic progress of the learner, such as when the parent communicate through letters or using phone calls’ [PFGD, 12]</i></p>

3.10.1 Logistical and Ethical Considerations:

After approval of the research proposal by the supervisors, the researcher sought permission from the Director of Post Graduate Studies of Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology to carry out the study. This enabled the researcher to apply for a research permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation. This enabled the researcher to get permission from the County Commissioner and the Director of Education Nyamira County. Before data collection, the researcher explained to all expected respondents the purpose of the study and acquired their permission to participate in the study by writing an introductory letter explaining details of the aim and the procedure for the research. In any study involving people, ethical considerations are vital in protecting sampled participants from any potential harm, stress, anxiety and myriad negative consequences for participating in a research (Robson, 2011).

Ethical requirements were observed during the research designing, conducting, recording and reporting research findings. This study was conducted with full human rights protection through ensuring that the dignity, rights, safety and wellbeing of research participants. Only eligible subjects were asked to participate in the study. The researcher explained the purposes of the study, the research procedures, benefits and length of time of the study to all participants. The subjects who agreed to participate were informed and assured that the data would be kept strictly confidential. They were informed that they had a right to withdraw from this project at any time without prejudice and for any reason. They were also asked to sign a consent form. Given the importance of informed consent, the researchers provided consent information to all sampled participants or their representatives in a language that is understandable and clear. Typically, informed consent was documented and was approved by the two supervisors. One copy was given to the individual signing the form and another copy was kept by the researcher. The basic elements of a consent form included: An explanation of the purpose of the study, the reason that they were selected, the amount of time that they were involved and their responsibilities during the research. During data collection stage, the respondents were guided with an aim of seeking their volunteerism in the study.

Emphasis was made on confidentiality as the respondents from the involved institutions were coded instead of reflecting their names. The researcher not collected personal details like names and telephone numbers in order to ensure non-disclosure of identity. No one else had access to responses of respondents except the researcher and his assistants. The data collected was strictly used only for the study and not any other purpose. Above all, this study was conducted in line with research ethics whereby respondents were respected.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results and discussion on Perspectives of Pre-school lead teachers influence Epstein’s theoretical lens of Parental Involvement in preschoolers’ education?

The research question responded to was:

How do the pre-school lead teachers perceive the application of Epstein’s theoretical lens of Parental Involvement in preschoolers’ education?

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Teachers were asked to score some statements on a likert scale their attitude towards inclusive education .Their responses were as shown in Table 4.1

Preschool lead teachers were asked to score some statements on a likert scale showing their perspectives on application of Epstein’s theoretical lens to parental involvement in the education of preschoolers .Their responses were as shown in Table 4.1

Table 4.1: Preschool lead teachers’ perspectives on application of Epstein’s theoretical lens to parental involvement in the education of preschoolers in Public Primary Schools in Manga Sub-county, Kenya (n=39).

Statement	Frequency					Total F	Total score	Av. Score	% score
	VS	S	U	D	VD				
How satisfied are you with home parenting environments for preschoolers?	4(10%)	9(23%)	3(8%)	15(38%)	8(21%)	39	103	2.64	52.82
How satisfied are you with home-school and school-home communication?	23(59%)	5(13%)	2(5%)	4(10%)	5(13%)	39	154	3.95	78.97
How satisfied are you with volunteering services of parents at school ?	21(54%)	11(28%)	2(5%)	2(5%)	3(8%)	39	162	4.15	83.08
How satisfied are you with learning at home for preschoolers ?	3(8%)	2(5%)	24(62%)	5(13%)	5(13%)	39	110	2.82	56.41
How satisfied are you with inclusion of parents in decision making process?	2(5%)	23(59%)	7(18%)	1(3%)	6(15%)	39	131	3.36	67.18
How satisfied are you with integration of resources & services from the community?	15(38%)	13(33%)	7(18%)	3(8%)	1(3%)	39	152	3.97	79.49
Grand total								3.48	69.63

Legend: VS (Very Satisfied) = 5, S (satisfied)= 4, UD (Undecided) = 3, DS (dissatisfied) = 2 and VDS (Very Dissatisfied) = 1

When asked whether they were satisfied with home parenting environment for preschoolers, the study revealed that 4(10%) of the preschool lead teachers were very satisfied, 9(23%) were satisfied, 3(8%) were undecided, 15(38%) were dissatisfied and 8(21%) were very dissatisfied. Generally the teachers scored an average score of 2.64(52.82%) on the likert scale, an indication that they were undecided on home parenting environment for preschoolers.

When asked whether they were satisfied with school to home and home to school communication, the study revealed that 23(59%) of the preschool lead teachers were very satisfied, 5(13%) were satisfied, 2(5%) were undecided, 4(10%) were dissatisfied, 5(13%) were very dissatisfied. Generally the teachers scored an average score of 3.95(78.97%) on the likert scale an indication that they were satisfied with school to home and home to school communication.

When asked whether they were satisfied with volunteering services of parents at school, the study revealed that 21(54%) of the preschool lead teachers were very satisfied, 11(28%) were satisfied, 2(5%) were undecided, 2(5%) were dissatisfied, 3(8%) were very dissatisfied.. Generally the teachers scored an average score of 4.15(83.08%) on the likert scale an indication that they were satisfied on this item.

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When asked whether they were satisfied with learning at home for preschoolers, the study revealed that 3(8%) of the preschool lead teachers were very satisfied, 2(5%) were satisfied, 24(62%) were undecided, 5(13%) were dissatisfied, 5(13%) were very dissatisfied. Generally the preschool lead teachers scored an average score of 2.82(56.41%) on the likert scale an indication that they were undecided with learning at home for preschoolers.

When asked whether they were satisfied with inclusion of parents in decision making at school, the study revealed that 2(5 %) were very satisfied, 23(59%) were satisfied, 7(18%) were undecided, 1(3%) were dissatisfied, 6(15%) were very dissatisfied. Generally the preschool lead teachers scored an average score of 3.36(67.68%) on the likert scale an indication that they were undecided with this item.

When asked whether they were satisfied with integration of resources and services from the school community for purposes teaching and learning, the study revealed that 15(38%) were very satisfied, 13(33%) were satisfied, 7(18%) were undecided, 3(8%) were dissatisfied, 1(3%) were very dissatisfied. Generally the preschool lead teachers scored an average score of 3.97(79.49%) on the likert scale an indication that they were very satisfied with integration of resources and services from the school community for purposes teaching and learning.

Generally, the preschool lead teachers scored a mean of 3.48(69.63%) across the likert scale showing that they were undecided on application of Epstein’s theoretical lens to parental involvement in the education of preschoolers in Public Primary Schools in Manga Sub-county, Kenya.

In fact, one of the ECDE divisional coordinators said that, “Teachers with negative attitude towards teaching lack confident about subject content, lack commitment towards good learning and are resistant to change” (ECDEC 1).

The study also sought the perspectives of the preschool lead teachers on the contributions of parental volunteering services at pre-school on their children’s learning. The results were as shown in Table 4.2

Table 4.2: Perspectives of preschool lead teachers on the Contributions of parental volunteering services at pre-school on their children’s learning outcomes according to parents (n=39)

Statement	Frequency					Total F	Total score	Av. Score	% score
	SA	A	U	D	SD				
Parents participate in Parents meetings.	19(49%)	12(30%)	3(8%)	3(8%)	2(5%)	39	160	4.10	82.05
Parents attend organized sporting activities of the school.	5(13%)	9(23%)	4(10%)	18(46%)	3(8%)	39	112	2.87	57.44
Parents attend organized functions of the school such as speech and prize giving days.	15(38%)	8(20%)	5(13%)	7(18%)	4(10%)	39	140	3.59	71.79
Parents always visit the school to follow up on my child’s learning progress	3(8%)	2(5%)	5(13%)	19(49%)	10(26%)	39	86	2.20	44.10
Parents pay school fees and other levies promptly.	10(26%)	7(18%)	6(15%)	5(13%)	11(28%)	39	117	3	60.00
Parents participate actively in activities involving parents and teachers in school.	8(20%)	5(13%)	3(8%)	13(33%)	10(26%)	39	111	2.84	56.92
Parents make donations during school prize giving day	9(23%)	4(10%)	5(13%)	17(43%)	4(10%)	39	114	2.92	58.46
Grand total								3.25	65.02

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On the concern of parents participating in parents meeting, 19(49%) of the preschool lead teacher strongly agreed, 12(30%) agreed, 3(8%) were undecided, 3(8%) disagreed and 2(5%) strongly disagreed with this statement. Overall, the teachers scored a mean of 4.40(82.05%) on this statement an indication that they agreed that the parents participated in parents meetings.

About parents attending organized activities of the school, 5(13%) of the preschool lead teacher strongly agreed, 9(23%) agreed, 4(10%) were undecided, 18(46%) disagreed and 3(8%) strongly disagreed with this statement. Overall, the teachers scored a mean of 2.87(57.44%) on this statement an indication that they were undecided on this statement.

On the concern of whether parents attend organized functions of the school such as speeches and prize giving days, 15(38%) of the preschool lead teacher strongly agreed, 8(20%) agreed, 5(13%) were undecided, 7(18%) disagreed and 4(10%) strongly disagreed with this statement. Overall, the teachers scored a mean of 3.59(71.79%) on this statement an indication that they agreed on this statement.

On the issue of making visits to school for purposes of making follow ups on their children's learning progress, 3(8%) of the preschool lead teacher strongly agreed, 2(5%) agreed, 5(13%) were undecided, 19(49%) disagreed and 10(26%) strongly disagreed with this statement. Overall, the teachers scored a mean of 2.20(44.10%) on this statement an indication that they were disagreed with this statement.

On the concern of payment of school fees and other levels, 10(26%) of the preschool lead teacher strongly agreed, 7(18%) agreed, 6(15%) were undecided, 5(13%) disagreed and 11(28%) strongly disagreed with this statement. Overall, the teachers scored a mean of 3(60%) on this statement an indication that they were undecided on this statement.

On the concern of active participation of parents in activities involving parents and teachers in school, 8(20%) of the preschool lead teacher strongly agreed, 5(13%) agreed, 3(8%) were undecided, 13(33%) disagreed and 10(26%) strongly disagreed with this statement. Overall, the teachers scored a mean of 2.84(56.92%) on this statement an indication that they were undecided on this statement.

On the issue of parents making donations during school prize giving day, 9(23%) of the preschool lead teacher strongly agreed, 4(10%) agreed, 5(13%) were undecided, 17(43%) disagreed and 4(10%) strongly disagreed with this statement. Overall, the teachers scored a mean of 2.93(58.46%) on this statement an indication that they were undecided on this statement.

These sentiments were also shared by one of the pre-school lead teacher, where it was found that in spite of the fact that parental participation in pre-school activities increases the school attendants and reduces the child truancy since the parent will always communicate with the teacher about the academic progress of the learner, most parent rarely participated in their children learning at school. One of the pre-school teachers had to say:

A child whose parents adequately participates in school activities and is interested in his or her academic outcome is also well disciplined. This is because the parent will always be much concerned with the child behaviour and would always offer any discipline measures in case of any deviance behaviour from the child. However most parent in my school rarely come to school during parents' meetings [PLT 4]

This shows that parent's participation in school activities and Parents meetings would also encourage good academic and social performance of the learners. Albertson (2012) in his study in USA on the parent and teacher connection as the key to successful children's education, the study found that interactions with teachers in the case studies provided an interesting look into how they grew from uninvolved parents to dedicated, pro-active parents involved with their children's teachers and schools.

Similarly, majority of the parents at 21(54%) disagreed that they could attend organized functions of the school such as speech and prize giving days, while only 13(36%) confirmed that they attend organized functions of the school such as speech and prize giving days, as 4(10%) were neutral. This shows that most of the parents were not willing to attend school functions as a show of their commitment and involvement in their children's academic welfare. However, another representative statement from the preschool a county woman representative during the interview also showed that parents who take part in school functions and activities develop good relationship with the teachers, which is very crucial for a child's academic and social development. She said;

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When parents participate in school activities and functions such as book donations and prize giving days, they develop good interactions with the teachers and good relationship also blossoms. This in the long run would encourage good academic and behavior development of the learners; however in my school very few parents are active in his area [CWR 6]

This shows that effective involvement of parents in school activities and functions would encourage academic and social development of the learners. Similarly, Mwirichia (2013) conducted a study on the influence of parental involvement on academic performance of preschool children and found that various forms of parents' participation in educational activities at school; education activities at home, parent-school communication and home environment had an influence on the academic performance of preschool learners. Epstein (2009) claims that in order to get parents involved, it is very important to include parents in developing, reviewing and improving school policies that affect students at the school. This will allow families to have some input in decisions that affect their children's education.

The study also found that a small number of the parents would also visit the school to follow up on their children's academic progress. This revelation was supported by 29(75%) who disagreed with the statement, while only 5(13%) agreed and 5(13%) were neutral. This shows that majority of the parents did not like visiting their children's schools to check on their academic and social performance. However, many visits to the school would also help the parent to know the fees status of the learner and if capable make payments to facilitate smooth running of the school and encourage the learner to stay in school. This would eventually promote good holistic development of the child. One of the lead ECDE Coordinator also said;

We encourage parents to make school visits as many times as they can to check of the academic development of their children. Besides, an impromptu visit would also promote good behaviour among the learners as we inform them about their children behaviours. But in our schools, we have not achieved much on this area may be because majority of parent don't understand their role

[ECDEC 3]

These sentiments were also echoed by one of the preschool lead teachers in an interview:

Parental involvement in learner's education welfare is very crucial for their academic growth and cognitive development. This is because these parents are able to identify academic problems facing their children and come up with solutions during their school visits. These parents are also able to help in such academic activities such as homework, provision of learning materials and conducive home environment for learning, but most parents I know are not positive on their children's learning process [PSLT 8]

This shows that parental school visit was crucial for the learner's academic and behavioural development. Similarly, a study on parental involvement by Brannon (2008) in USA found that parents' participation in activities such as volunteering in the classroom, attending events such as school meetings or assemblies, going on field trips and having parent-teacher conferences, was closely associated with higher reading achievement, lower rates of grade retention, and fewer years of special education. This further revealed that parental involvement was linked with character education in children which results in pupils attaining higher academic achievement, more positive attitudes about homework, and improved perceptions of their own competence. Moreover, a qualitative case study was conducted in Namibia by Gudlaug (2010) on the Effects of Parental Involvement in Education. The study found that generally most parents were not fully involved with their children's education; some had low expectations towards their children's education and their future. These parents had not recognized the importance of staying involved with their child's education.

Majority of the parents at 78.62% also did not confirm that they pay school fees and other fees in time, while only 13.2% confirmed as 8.18% remained neutral. This shows that most of the parents were not cooperative when it came to supporting the school financially. This was also supported by an area chief, who noted that:

Our school is unlucky because most of the parents do not pay their school fees in time and this has really hindered us in running the school with hiccups. But prompt payment of school fees helped the learner to stay in the school and not miss classes and eventually they perform better in academics [AC]

This shows that when parents respond promptly to the fee requirement for their children in school, they encourage staying in the school for good academic outcome. Many studies such as Mulligan, (2005); Mitchell, Haggerty, Hampton, & Pairman, (2006) also documented that parental involvement in early childhood education is important in a number of ways and parents who meet their obligations as parents would generally benefit children's learning and school success.

Manasi, Ndiku, Sang and Ejakait (2014) conducted a study to establish the influence of parental involvement in the provision of teaching - learning resources in primary schools and educational outcomes. However, the study revealed low parental involvement in provision of teaching and learning resources. There was a significant relationship between parental involvement in payment of fees to access, PTA teachers and school academic performance (Manasi, et al., 2014)

The study also found that majority of the parents at 23(59%) did not participate actively in activities involving parents and teachers in school, while only 13(33%) actively participated, as 3(8%) were neutral. In fact, 21(53%) of the parents did not confirm that they were readily making donations during school prize award day, while only 13(33%) confirmed their active participation as 5(13%) were neutral on this statement. This shows that most rarely participated on school activities such as book donation functions and were not willing to take part in these functions. However, parental participation in school activities would encourage good academic performance of children as it was explained by one of the ECDE divisional coordinators, in an interview, he said that there was a relationship between parental volunteering services and academic outcome of the child. The ECDE divisional coordinator said:

"Parents who are very much concerned with their children's academic outcome do a lot of things to their children such as attending organized functions of the school such as speech and prize giving days and participation in Parent meetings. Consequently, the child responds to these parental efforts by liking school and developing positive attitude towards it." [ECDEC 3].

It can therefore be deduced that parental volunteering services in pre-schools, in such activities as prize giving day, sporting activities and donations do contribute to their children learning outcomes. Home environment was found to have influence on academic performance of preschool learners both positively and negatively. This was also echoed by the findings of Gikonyo (2013) who investigated the influence of home-school collaboration on learners' academic achievement among pre-schoolers, and established that parental involvement in school activities affected academic achievement among pre-schoolers.

Moreover, Ang'ienda (2013) conducted a study where one of the objectives was to investigate the influence of parental volunteering on children's learning process. The study established that about 78.9% of parents of the pupils who frequently volunteered performed good and 5.3% performed excellent in their class work. These percentages were relatively higher than those of which their parents never or rarely volunteered.

During the interview with the ECDE lead teachers, it was also found that the contributions of parental volunteering services at pre-school had a great influence on their children's learning outcomes. One of the preschool lead teachers offered that;

'Children whose parents participated in their education were able to play take part in various games, sing and dance, interact with their peers well hence did well in class. This is because such parents who participated in games encouraged their children to take part too and this led to children developing holistically which in turn enhanced academic achievement'' [PLT 5]

5. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of Perspectives of pre-school lead teachers on Epstein's theoretical lens of Parental Involvement in preschoolers' education.

The purpose of the study was to explore the perspectives of selected stakeholders on Epstein's theoretical lens to parental involvement in Pre-schoolers education in Kenya. The research question of the study was:

How do the preschool lead teachers perceive Epstein's theoretical lens of Parental Involvement in preschoolers' education?

Based on the fact that preschool lead teachers had perspectives on Epstein's theoretical lens of Parental Involvement in preschoolers' education, this study found out that:

The preschool lead teachers were satisfied with home parenting environment for preschoolers, the study revealed that 4(10%) of the preschool lead teachers were very satisfied, 9(23%) were satisfied, 3(8%) were undecided, 15(38%) were dissatisfied and 8(21%) were very dissatisfied. Generally the teachers scored an average score of 2.64(52.82%) on the likert scale, an indication that they were undecided on home parenting environment for preschoolers.

When asked whether they were satisfied with school to home and home to school communication, the study revealed that 23(59%) of the preschool lead teachers were very satisfied, 5(13%) were satisfied, 2(5%) were undecided, 4(10%) were dissatisfied, 5(13%) were very dissatisfied. Generally the teachers scored an average score of 3.95(78.97%) on the likert scale an indication that they were satisfied with school to home and home to school communication.

When asked whether they were satisfied with volunteering services of parents at school, the study revealed that 21(54%) of the preschool lead teachers were very satisfied, 11(28%) were satisfied, 2(5%) were undecided, 2(5%) were dissatisfied, 3(8%) were very dissatisfied.. Generally the teachers scored an average score of 4.15(83.08%) on the likert scale an indication that they were satisfied on this item.

When asked whether they were satisfied with learning at home for preschoolers, the study revealed that 3(8%) of the preschool lead teachers were very satisfied, 2(5%) were satisfied, 24(62%) were undecided, 5(13%) were dissatisfied, 5(13%) were very dissatisfied. Generally the preschool lead teachers scored an average score of 2.82(56.41%) on the likert scale an indication that they were undecided with learning at home for preschoolers.

When asked whether they were satisfied with inclusion of parents in decision making at school, the study revealed that 2(5 %) were very satisfied, 23(59%) were satisfied, 7(18%) were undecided, 1(3%) were dissatisfied, 6(15%) were very dissatisfied. Generally the preschool lead teachers scored an average score of 3.36(67.68%) on the likert scale an indication that they were undecided with this item.

When asked whether they were satisfied with integration of resources and services from the school community for purposes teaching and learning, the study revealed that 15(38%) were very satisfied, 13(33%) were satisfied, 7(18%) were undecided, 3(8%) were dissatisfied, 1(3%) were very dissatisfied. Generally the preschool lead teachers scored an average score of 3.97(79.49%) on the likert scale an indication that they were very satisfied with integration of resources and services from the school community for purposes teaching and learning.

Generally, the preschool lead teachers scored a mean of 3.48(69.63%) across the likert scale showing that they were undecided on application of Epstein's theoretical lens to parental involvement in the education of preschoolers in Public Primary Schools in Manga Sub-county, Kenya.

5.2 Conclusion on perspectives of pre-school lead teachers on Epstein's theoretical lens of Parental Involvement in preschoolers' education.

Generally, the preschool lead teachers scored a mean of 3.48(69.63%) across the likert scale showing that they were undecided on application of Epstein's theoretical lens to parental involvement in preschoolers education. Although the preschool lead teachers were undecided across the likert scale, Epstein's components they perceived to be applied in preschoolers education included: Home to school and school to home communication, volunteering services of parents at school and collaborating with community in resources and services. They perceived poor parenting of preschoolers, poor learning of preschoolers at home and that parents were not properly involved in decision making of their children at school.

5.3 Recommendations on perspectives of pre-school lead teachers on Epstein's theoretical lens of Parental Involvement in preschoolers' education

In light of the findings on the perspectives of Preschool lead teachers that there were no proper parenting and learning of preschoolers' at home and that parents were not properly involved in the decision making process of preschoolers, this study recommends that:

Parents should also be enlightened on the best communication practices with both their children and the school administration to foster good parent-teacher and parent-child relationship as this will have a positive influence on preschoolers' education.

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Teachers and other stakeholders of education should educate parents on the importance of teaching and learning resources in improving their children's learning outcome. The proper provision of these basic needs could improve children's performance in various learning skills.

There should be clear guidance and policies on parental participation in educational activities in preschools as this will encourage parental awareness on school participation.

5.4. Suggestion for further study

The following areas have been suggested for further studies:

- i. A study on effective parental home determinants of preschoolers learning would expound the understanding of the present study.
- ii. A study on factors influencing parental decisions making in preschoolers education in Kenya.
- iii. A study on modern home parenting styles of preschoolers in Kenya.

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