

Relationship between Parental Engagement and Pre-Schoolers Access to Early Childhood Education in Kenya

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Abstract: Access and engagement to early childhood education worldwide helps prepare young children to succeed in school and become better citizens. The major challenge in Kenya was that Early Childhood Education (ECE) was left in the hands of the community and parents, resulting in a big variation in type and quality of ECE. Even with ECE being devolved to the county government, access to preschool education continue to be a challenge. Hence, the present study explored the relationship between Parental engagement and Pre-schoolers access to early childhood education in Kenya. The objective the study was to find out the relationship between Parental engagement and Pre-schoolers access to early childhood education in Kenya. The study adopted concurrent triangulation research design and was informed by Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979) and Emile Durkeim's Functional Theory (1858-1916). The target population included 21 head teachers, 228 ECE lead teachers and 863 parents and a sub-county education officer. The sample sizes were 9 head teachers, 43 ECE lead teachers, 76 parents and a sub-county education officer. The instruments of data collection were; questionnaires, interview schedule and document analysis. Validity of the instruments was enhanced through piloting and by experts. Reliability of the instruments was ensured by Test-Retest method. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and presented in form of tables, graphs and percentages. Qualitative data was coded and classified into major themes as they emerged. The findings from the analysis revealed that Parents' engagement in children's academic work and school activities had a strong positive relationship ($r=0.631$). It was also concluded that more parental engagement was required to make school accessibility easier in order to improve the quality of children's education. The present study recommends that parents should sacrifice themselves in engaging with education of their children at early years to strengthen the cognitive growth of the young ones. The current study also recommends that a parental engagement programme suited to public Early Childhood Education in schools in Kenya. Parents are recommended also not to have too high expectations from ECE within a short time. The researcher recommends for a further research on preschool environmental factor as determinants of preschoolers' access to early childhood education in Kenya.

Keywords: Early Childhood Education (ECE), Engagement and Pre-Schoolers Access.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In spite of the efforts made in education in Kenya, a number of challenges still persist. These include cost of Education, inequalities and inequity in access to Education, high wastage rates, under-enrolment, low transition and retention of children in schools. The goal to make enrolment in early childhood education compulsory would not be achieved if factors contributing to low enrolment in the ECDE centres were not identified and addresses. For this purpose, the study seeks to investigate into selected parental factors as determinants of preschoolers’ access to early childhood education in Masaba North Sub-County, Kenya.

1.2 Statement of the Problem:

The constitution of Kenya (2010) and basic education Act (2013) gives every child a right to compulsory basic education. But, currently in Kenya, the national government does not contribute much towards the implementation of ECDE programme. However, the provision of ECDE is the responsibility of the county governments in Kenya, community and the parents. While there was a consensus internationally that ECDE places children at a better start for primary education and later academic achievement in subsequent higher learning, the importance of ECDE has not been fully appreciated by the society. This could be explained by low enrolment in early childhood education centres especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, where the situation is worse with only 40% of children access to ECDE programmes. In Kenya, the access to preschool education was estimated at 42% in 2009 and 50% in 2010. This means that about half of the pupils were not enrolled for preschool education in the foresaid years.

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

1.3 Purpose of the Study:

The Purpose of the Study was to explore the relationship between Parental Engagement and Pre-Schoolers access to Early Childhood Education in Kenya.

1.4 Objective of the Study:

The objective of the study was to explore the relationship between Parental Engagement and Pre-Schoolers access to Early Childhood Education in Kenya.

1.5 Scope of the Study:

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

1.6 Limitations of the study:

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

1.7 Theoretical framework of the study:

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

1.7.1 Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory

This study was guided by the ecological systems theory developed by Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979). The epistemological underpinning of this study recognizes the importance of the influence of parental factors on preschoolers’ access to preschool education. In relation to the current study, Bronfenbrenner (1979) proposed a systems theory that place children’s learning and access to education in an ecological perspective. This theory looks at children and parents within the context of a system of relationships that form their environment. In this regard, Bronfenbrenner identifies five complex layers of environment each having an effect on a child’s learning process (Morrison, 2007).

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

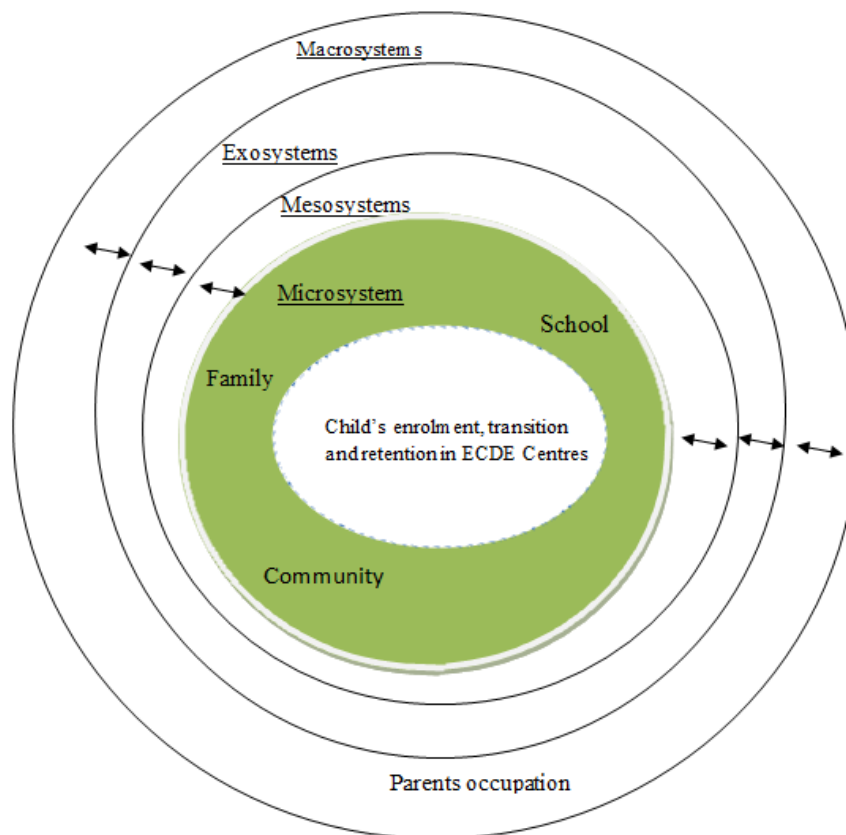


Figure 1.1: Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory

Source: Santrock (2007)

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

The Mesosystem comprises links between Microsystems, such as home, school, and neighborhood. The Mesosystem was shaped by the various connections between and among individuals, objects, and circumstances (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Bronfenbrenner distinguishes four forms of these connections. The first was multistring participation; this type of connections takes place when the same individual participates in more than one setting, such as home, church and work place. Second connection was an indirect linkage which occurs when the same person did not actively participate in both settings, but nonetheless influenced through an intermediate link that facilitates this connection. The third connection was

intersecting communication whereby persons in two or more settings directly interact with each other for the purpose of sharing information (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The fourth connection was inter-setting knowledge whereby information about a setting exists in a separate setting. In a context of this study the Mesosystem was particularly important in determining parents' attitude and expectation from pre-primary education; whereby parents, views and thoughts would be influenced by interaction with different settings such as home, school environment and work place.

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

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

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

1.7.2 Emile Durkeim's Functional Theory:

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

Durkheim actually envisioned society as an organism, and just like within an organism, each component plays a necessary part, but none could function alone, and one experiences a crisis or fails, other parts must adopt to fill the void in some way. Within functionalist theory, the different parts of the society were primarily composed of social institutions, each of that was designed to fill different needs, and each of that had particular consequences for the form and shape of the society. The parts all depend on each other. The core institutions defined by sociology and which were important to understand for this theory included: family, government, economy, media, education, and religion. According to functionalism, an institution only exists because it serves a vital role in the functioning of the society. If it no longer serves a role, an institution dies away. When new needs evolve or emerge, new institutions were created to meet them.

In most societies, the government, or state, provides education for the children of the family, which in turn pays taxes on which the state depends to keep itself running. The family was a dependent upon the school to help children grow up to have good jobs so that they could raise and support their own families. In the process, the children become law-abiding,

taxpaying citizens, who in turn support the state. From the functionalist perspective, if all goes well, the parts of the society produce order, stability, and productivity. If all did not go well, the parts of the society then must adapt to produce new forms of order, stability, and productivity.

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

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

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

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Parental Engagement and Access to Education:

Parental engagement involved partnerships between families, schools and communities in raising and ensuring that children benefit from education (Muller 2009). According to Graham–Brown (2006) children whose homes provide a stimulating environment, full of physical objects like books, magazines and other learning materials were more motivated to participate in education. It was likely that children from poor families were not provided with adequate educational materials and opt not to enrol in school and if enrolled they were likely to drop out of school than those who were from better families.

Malcolm and Thorpe (2003) conducted a study on pupils' attendance school in England. The study focused on the strategies used to promote good school attendance. Some of the strategies used to improve attendance were: Discouraging schools to authorize absence; working with parents, raising awareness with the general public, visiting pupils who were absent, rewarding good attendance, and taking roll call. Malcolm et al (2003) study differs with the current study as it was carried in London and based on issues of pupil attendance. This study on the other hand investigate on determinants of preschool access in Masaba North Sub-County.

In USA, Michelle (2012) conducted a study on the influence of parent-teacher interactions on students' social development. Sixty-seven parents and teachers shared their lived experiences of positive and less than satisfactory parent-teacher interactions. Data were collected through the use of individual in-depth semi-structured interviews and focus group sessions. The key finding from that study revealed that the nature of parent-teacher interactions was either collaborative or non-collaborative. The findings further revealed that parents and teachers had a preference for using the discussion, evidence, and relational strategies during their interactions, irrespective of the context or purpose. Overall, this research identified that five social influence strategies resulted in satisfactory experiences of parent-teacher interactions affording positive outcomes for students learning outcomes and access to education. Despite the relevance of the reviewed study to the current study, the study adopted qualitative approach unlike the present study that used both qualitative and quantitative approaches. This was perceived to counter the limitations of quantitative and qualitative when used alone. The present study also determine the predictive relationship which was missing in the reviewed study.

Thompson (2014) conducted a study to describe and analyze the experiences and engagement of African American parents who have male children receiving special education services in schools. The qualitative data were gathered and analyzed to answer the research questions. The findings revealed that many parents had experienced obstacles that prevented them from meaningful engagement in the educational planning for their children such as low communication between parents

and teachers and the lack of parental understanding of their rights and roles. However the findings of this study reflected that home-school communication influenced special children's academic achievement. This finding was in a context quite different from Kenyan's and was geared towards children with special needs. Hence, the current study provide findings for selected parental variables as determinants for children access to ECE that would help in the development of policies and practices in the Kenyan situation that reflect the children, families, schools and communities in the local environment to improve ECE centres access .

In Malaysia, Abd, Zuwati, Umi and Jal (2013) conducted a study to investigate the extent of parental involvement in the education of their secondary school children. The participants consisted of 950 Form Four students from government assisted secondary schools in Malaysia. The questionnaires were used to collect data. The findings of the study revealed that interaction and communication, parenting practices, leisure, openness and acceptance were the predictive factors and had a positive relationship with parental involvement in education of secondary school children. Multiple regression analysis also indicated that the family context contributed 44.5 percent to the involvement of parents at home as compared to only 16.0 percent for involvement of parents in school. Overall, the study found a conducive and harmonious family context was able to motivate the children to succeed in their studies. Despite the relevance of the study to the current study, the study was conducted among secondary school students unlike the present study that was conducted among preschoolers who were perceived to differ in terms of developmental challenges. Strengthening the family institution and creating healthy family relationships.

In Nigeria, Fagbeminiyi (2011) study on the role of parents in early childhood education aimed at providing solutions to early childhood education. A survey approach was used through self-administered questionnaires, and analysis was done using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Based on the findings of this study, parental involvement, that was emotional care and support had a significant influence on early childhood education, particularly the academic performance of the child. More so, it was observed that the extent of parental educational attainment had also a significant influence on the age which the child was being sent to school. The study further discovered that parental involvement was very essential in early childhood education and this helps to broaden the child's horizon, enhance social relationships, and promote a sense of self-esteem and self-efficacy. Fagbeminiyi (2011) study only used qualitative approach and collected data using only self-administered questionnaires on contrary the current study involved both qualitative and quantitative methods. The study also collected data using interviews and questionnaires.

In Ghana, Nyarko (2011) conducted a study to establish the effects of parental school involvement on children's access to education. To assess whether engagement within the school environment was still lagging behind engagement at home, study compared parents who had absolutely no involvement to those who had at least some. Study found that average involvement at home ($M=2.89$, $SD=0.25$) exceeds average involvement at school ($M=2.77$, $SD=0.19$), but the difference was minimal. Almost all parents report that they never devote time to assist with children's homework at home. Married parents were more likely to be involved in their children's education than single parents. While Nyarko (2011) study was based on parental school involvement in Ghana the current study covered issues to deal determinants of parental factors on preschoolers access in Masaba North Sub-county, in Kenya.

A qualitative study was conducted in Zimbabwe by Chindanya (2011) to establish how parents in a materially poor rural district of Zaka were involved in their children's education. Observation, semi-structured interviews (for school heads), focus group interviews (for parents) and the open-ended questionnaire (for teachers) were used in this qualitative study covering ten primary schools. Respondents were selected through the use of chain reference sampling and sampling by case. A total of one hundred and forty (140) participants were selected. It emerged from the research that parents, teachers and school heads/principals had very limited understanding of parental involvement. They generally thought that it was confined to activities done at school such as payment of school fees and levies, providing labour for the construction or renovation of school buildings and providing teaching/learning resources. The study also established that parental involvement was one of the determinants of children's success and access to educational opportunities. While the study provides a wealth findings on parental involvement, there were still areas of emphases in which the study did not address, the study had only provided the levels of parental involvement. However, the current study seek to establish the extent to which various levels of parental engagements affect preschool children's access to early childhood education.

Waswa (2016) conducted a study to determine the influence of parental involvement on children access rate to pre-primary education and transition rate to standard one in Kakamega central sub county, Kakamega County. The Study was based on both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection. Questionnaires were administered to 45 respondents

comprising of preschool teachers while interviews were conducted to 45 Parents of 45 preschools who were purposely selected. The data was analysed using simple percentages and frequency distribution tables to answer research questions. The study findings indicated that the low access and transition rate of children in early childhood Education Institutions was due to factors related to parental involvement. Although, Waswa (2016) study was based on both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection. The study used a smaller sample than the current study.

Owuor (2010) conducted a study to establish factors that were perceived to influence the provision of early childhood education in Madiany division. The study adopted descriptive survey methodology where both qualitative and quantitative approaches were utilised. The study further used probability random sampling as well as purposive sampling procedure. Questionnaires and interview schedule were administered to ECD teachers, parents and a DICECDE. The study findings indicated that parental engagement significantly predicted the provision of ECDE services. The study further established that the best strategy of improving ECDE was through collaborative partnerships among stakeholders. To improve the access to preschool education, the study recommended that the government should offer free ECDE services and collaborate with other stakeholders to provide holistic services to children. The reviewed study differs with the current study in that its adopted descriptive survey and Sigmund Freud's Psycho-Analytic Theory while the current study adopted Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems and Emile Durkeim's Functional Theory (1858-1916) and concurrent triangulation research design.

3. REESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research design:

This study adopted concurrent triangulation approach. According to Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Tuner, (2007) concurrent triangulation research involves the mixing of different methodological viewpoints. Concurrent triangulation approach is useful when one approach alone is inadequate. The use of both approaches (qualitative and quantitative) was perceived to increase the overall strength of a study and allows for the findings' richness in both depth and width in addressing the research problem (Creswell 2009). With concurrent triangulations, findings were likely to be more trustworthy and relevant than if separate approaches were used (Creswell 2009). Thus, the method was used for the purpose of triangulation which offsets the weaknesses of single research methods and provides better quality data. Within concurrent triangulation approach, the study in particular used Concurrent Triangulation design that involved the use of both quantitative and qualitative approaches. This design had a single phase-timing hence referred to as the "concurrent triangulation design" (Creswell, 2014). It generally involved the concurrent, but separate, collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data so that the researcher could best understand the research problem. A frame of concurrent triangulation research design was shown in figure 1.2.

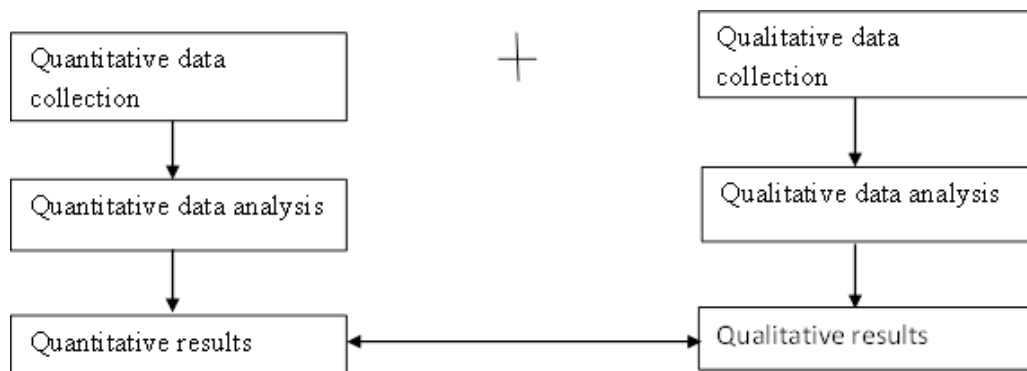


Figure 1.2: Shows a figurative representation of a Concurrent Triangulation Research Design.

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

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

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Although this design was the most popular concurrent triangulations design, it was also probably the most challenging of the four major types of designs.

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

3.2 Study area:

The study was carried out in Masaba North Sub-County of Nyamira County. Masaba North Sub-County was the second largest Sub-County in Nyamira with an area of 248.3 kilometres square. The population density of Masaba North Sub-County was 296 people per square kilometre. According to the Commission on Revenue Allocation (CRA), (2009) Masaba North Sub-County had a poverty index of 48.6. This was an indication that many people were poor. The predominant economic activity around Masaba North Sub-County was small scale and subsistence farming. Studies also indicate that the dropout and repetition rates especially in lower primary were high, some children do not take the three year preschool learning period required by government and other children join standard one without going through preschool education in Masaba North Sub-County of Nyamira County. Also given that most residents were poor and depend on casual work, small business and hawking to support their families, they use most of their time outside their family circle leaving their children with little or no support and supervision. It was against this background information that Masaba North Sub-County of Nyamira County was selected for this study that lies 34.48⁰E to 35.80⁰E and 0.29⁰S to 1⁰S.

3.3 Target Population:

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

Table 3.1: Target Population

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

Source: researcher, 2017

3.4 Sampling Techniques and Sample size:
3.4.1 Sampling Techniques:

Sampling is a process of selecting just a small group of people as representatives from a large group called the population (Nicholas, 2006). While, a sample is a smaller and more accessible subset of the population that adequately represents the overall group, thus enabling one to give an accurate picture of the population as a whole, with respect to the particular aspects of interest to the study (UNESCO, 2005). The current study employed cluster, purposive and simple random sampling design. The schools were selected using cluster sampling design. Cluster random sampling was used to select schools from the four geographical divisions. Oso and Onen (2009) argued that the important thing about cluster sampling strategy was that clusters or geographical areas were given equal chances of being selected. For this reason all the ECDE centres in the Masaba North Sub-County were divided into four clusters and then random sampling procedure were done

in every division. Cluster sampling ensured that all the geographic divisions were equally represented in the sample hence raising the external validity that was the ability to generalize the study results beyond the study sample.

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

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

3.4.2 Sample Size:

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

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

Table 3.2 Population and Sample Size

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

Source: Researcher, 2017

3.5 Research Instruments:

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

3.5.1 Questionnaires for parents:

The questionnaires were considered as ideal in collecting data from parents as respondents. According to Borg and Gall (1983) questionnaires are the most efficient way of reaching many respondents in the shortest time possible. The respondents were free to express their feelings and opinions about phenomena using questionnaires. Both open-ended and closed-ended questionnaires were used in this study. These questionnaires were divided in five parts: the first part was concerned with the general information of the respondents while the other four part contain detailed items related to the research questions. The questionnaires contained items meant to elicit information on the general view of parental determinants and preschoolers' access to preschool education. The questionnaire was further ideal for the study since the respondents were more confident in giving responses without the fear of being known since they were not required to give their names.

3.5.2 Questionnaires for lead teachers:

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

3.5.3 Interview schedules for primary school head teachers:

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

It was important that the participants completely comprehend the nature of the questions. They were given humble time to think and answer the interview questions. To be consistent with all the participants the researcher asked the same set of guide questions, so that the same areas were covered with each participant (Thomas, 2012).

However, the researcher changed the order or the wordings of the questions to obtain a deeper reflection. All guide questions were open-ended and encouraged reflection and descriptions of beliefs, observations and understanding of the effective participants.

3.5.4 Interview schedules for sub-county education officer:

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

Research interviews span a continuum from highly structured to unstructured. In unstructured interviews, the interaction is participant-driven and the direction taken is led by the interviewee. In structured interviews, a set of predetermined questions are asked by the researcher in a predetermined order, with little or no deviation from the set question list. The present study utilized a semi-structured interview format. In semi-structured interviews, the researcher approaches the interview with a set of topics and questions which are to be covered during the interview. However, the interviewer also has discretion over the order in which the questions are asked, and is also free to probe for further information when necessary. Such an approach also allows the interview to follow trajectories which appear important to the interviewee and may not have been covered in the designed interview protocol (Thomas, 2012). Given that, in this case, the researcher had a number of predetermined topics which needed to be covered yet had awareness that the study was exploratory in nature and as such, there should be an element of freedom in the interviews, a semi-structured approach was selected as the best fit for this phase of the research. It was decided that face-to-face interviews be conducted which took around one hour of interview, as these had a number of advantages over alternative methods such as telephone or online interviews. While

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telephone interviews have practical attractions such as reducing travel time and cost, concerns have been raised in the literature as to the implications for the development of rapport between interviewer and interviewee when interviews are not conducted face-to-face, and the loss of non-verbal information such as gestures which can aid communication. Given these concerns, face-to-face interviews were chosen over distance interviewing methods.

3.6 Data Collection Procedures:

The researcher obtain an authorization letter from the Board of Post Graduate Studies of Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology and then obtain a permit from the National Commission of Science, Technology and Innovation. Kombo and Tromp (2006), maintain that researchers must justify beyond any reasonable doubt the need for data collection. Therefore, the researcher sent introductory letters to all respondents and informants.

Before the collection of any data from the sample, an authorization letter was sought from the County Commissioner and the Director of Education Nyamira County and District Education Officer Masaba North Sub-County to carry out the study in the preschools. Respondents was informed on the importance of the study and was assured verbally of confidential treatment of information provided. Appointments were booked in person so as to give the respondents a hint on what the study expected of them.

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

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

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

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

3.7 Data Analysis:

Data was analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively.

3.7.1 Quantitative data analysis:

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

Table 3.3 Quantitative Data Analysis Matrix

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

Source: researcher, 2017

3.7.2 Qualitative data analysis:

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

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

The data collected were transcribed. Afterwards, thematic analysis was used to organize the transcribed data. Thematic organization and analysis is the process that identifies analyses and reports the occurrence of themes in the data collected from the research areas. The study followed the principles of thematic analysis as proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). According to Braun and Clarke (2006) thematic analysis is a method for identifying and analyzing patterns (themes) contained by data. It simply organizes and describes data set in details. Furthermore, thematic analysis interprets various aspects of research. Thematic analysis was appropriate for this study because it was not grounded in any particular theoretical framework and could hence be applied across a broad range of qualitative approaches, making it flexible. In carrying out thematic analysis to ensure rigor in data analysis, the study followed six basic steps according to Braun & Clarke (2006), thematic analysis procedure is as presented in table 3.4.

Table 3.4: Phases of thematic analysis

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

Adopted from Braun and Clarke (2006)

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

3.8 Ethical Considerations:

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

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Parents' Engagement and Access of Preschoolers to school:

The study attempts to assess the extent of parental engagement in their children's education and its impact on preschoolers' access to ECDE. Here, what was only required was to rate their approval in this area on the extent to which parents are engaged in the academic activities of their children who are preschoolers so that they can access ECDE. This was done on a maximum scale of 5 wherein 1- Almost Never, 2 – Rarely, 3- Sometimes, 4- Rather often, and 5- Very often. Table 4.1 shows the details.

Table 4.1: Parental Engagement and access to preschool

Parental Engagement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
I always check my child's homework	76	2.83	1.310
I always want to know my child's academic progress.	76	2.87	1.237
I support my child in any academic activity he/she embark on.	76	3.00	1.244
I guide my child when and where to do his/her studies at home	76	3.26	1.215
I go to my child's school regularly to find out his/her academic progress	76	3.33	1.482
I pay my child's school fees and other fees promptly.	76	3.28	1.271

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I participate actively in activities involving parents and teachers in my school	76	3.12	1.083
I encourage my child to read always	76	3.11	1.150
I help my child when he/she has problems with his/her peers or friends	76	4.64	.844
I attend school's Parent Teacher Association meetings of my child	76	3.49	1.361
I attend organized functions of the school such as speech and prize giving days	76	2.29	.921
I arrange for private classes for my child	76	2.20	1.376
It's my job to explain tough assignments to my child	76	3.11	1.066
It's my duty to make sure my child understands his or her assignments	76	3.25	1.328
I make sure that my child's homework gets done	76	3.37	1.263
I talk to my child about what he or she is learning	76	2.83	1.310
I get most of my information about my child's progress from report cards	76	3.62	1.032
Valid N (listwise)	76	3.15	1.205

Source: Field data, 2017

The findings in table 4.1 above revealed that the rate of engagement of parents on child or children's schooling welfare ranged between 2.20 (1.376) (close to rarely) and 4.64 (0.844) (approximately 4 - rather often.). The findings indicated that the parents rather often get most of information about their child's progress from report cards the is represented with second highest mean (3.62), illustrating that they are also less involves with visiting the school to find out the child academic progress resulting also to indication of 2.87 (1.237) which is that they rarely engage themselves. It is indicted that parents sometimes engage in supporting their child in any academic activity he/she embark on which is shown by a mean of 3.00 and Std Deviation of 1.244. That means that not very often the children enjoy parental support towards their education. It is also indicated that engagement of parents in attending organized functions of the school such as speech and prize giving days is rarely (2.29) (0.921). Parents not all through but sometimes they engage themselves in encouraging their child to read always this is shown by a mean of 3.11, which is now better even in comparison to a mean of 2.83, which shows that parents rarely engage themselves check their child's homework, and this is where the parents show put more effort in to ensure the child is accessing ECDE effectively. Also most parents sometimes participate actively in activities involving parents and teachers in my school which is indicated by mean of (3.12). It is sometimes, most parents visit the school to find out the academic progress of their children, indicating (3.33). According to the findings it is only sometimes parents engage in guiding their preschoolers when and where to do his/her studies at home as indicated by a mean of 3.26. Equally, most parents choose to sometimes engage in participating actively in activities involving parents and teachers in their children's school as indicated by (3.12). It is indicated that most parents they are rarely engaged to know their child academic progress (2.87).

The parents most strongly agreed that they help their child when he/she has problems with his/her peers or friends with the highest std. Deviation of 0.844 and Mean of 4.64, but much lower approval was given to the view that parents arrange for private classes for their child/children which indicated the minimal mean of 2.20 with a Std Deviation of 1.376, which was an indication that most parents were rarely engaged with their child's education. The overall rate of engagement was 3.15 (1.205) indicating that most parents were sometimes engaged with their preschoolers' school welfare.

Finding nine interviewed head teachers revealed that (90%) of them were of the view that parental engagement in the preschooler's academic work, progress and school activities, determined everything with child's access to education and successful transition. The head teachers see the engagement of the parents as being limited to the supply of some basic needs of the children such as food and clothes. In some instances, payment of school fees, the supply of school uniforms and other writing materials like pens and exercise books to the children, besides supporting child academic activity he/she embark on becomes a problem to such an extent that school authorities had to drive some of the children home for these basic educational needs of these children to be provided by the parents. The head teachers G1 remarked:

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Some of the children come to school without food. They only eat when they go home after school. How do you expect a child subjected to this treatment to pay attention to what is being taught in class, and consequently perform well in their academics? (G1)

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

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

The E1 also noted that work commitments sometimes made home supervision and attendance at school events difficult. Nevertheless, the parents tried to be engaged in their children's school activities. Jackson and Cooper (1989) agree that even interested and concerned parents may be prevented from participating in school activities by time and circumstances. The head teachers understood well that both parents had to work long hours to support their families. The head teacher of school B explained:

Parents are busy working, come home late, and have little time for the child. Where both parents are working, they leave their young children under the care of house helps. In some cases, the children arrive home to find the parents not having arrived.(B1)

Work was definitely a barrier, as the majorities of parents were working or involved in business and felt that many meetings disrupted their schedules and even when summoned to discipline their children, they felt that the teachers could do it: "So why call me so many times?" The head teacher from school B concurred that some working parents could not get permission from their seniors to attend meetings "so they will not come." In addition, parents who worked during the day might have been unable to arrange time off from work to attend events at the school during the day. Furthermore, if they took time off from work, they might not be paid and could even lose their jobs. Teachers could therefore encourage parental engagement by calling meetings very early or during the evening after classes.

The interview schedule also revealed that, most of the parents do not have the academic knowledge and capability as a result, it is difficult for them to teach and assist their children to do their homework at home. This make them to exempt themselves from engaging in asking then what they learnt in school and assisting them to do their homework. The sub-county education officer (P) stressed as one parent told him:

'Your "modern day" subjects especially Sounds are too difficult for me to understand how to pronounce, so I find it difficult teaching and assisting my children to do their homework whenever they bring them home' (P).

The head teachers from school D1 also added that:

Some parents usually come home very tired. This makes it difficult for them to supervise their children to study at home always, which in long run child may lose interest of school due to lack of engagement from the parent which will motive the pupil to put more effort in education. He further explained that they usually go to bed earlier than the children and this give the "stubborn" ones the chance to roam about in town instead of reading their books. (D1)

The head teachers from school H remarked:

Instead of the children to sit down at home at the study area provided or given by the parents, I usually see most of them roaming about in the village at night especially when there are funerals or any entertaining programmes like night jams and video shows going on the community. I blame the parents for such behaviours of the children since they should engage in commanding them to stay home and study.(H1)

Head teachers were, not very positive about the cooperation they received from parents on homework assignments. One head teacher from school G was dismissive of some parents regarding their engagement at home:

When you give homework to the children you will find that they don't even complete it and when you call the parent to find out if he makes follow-ups he won't turn up. And literate parents seemed to work more with their children at home, but illiterate parents do not bother. (G1)

The head teacher of school D observed that some of the parents were concerned with their children's schoolwork:

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Because you see them come to follow up in school what their children are doing. But the ones who are not concerned are the majority.(D1)

It was clear that head teachers did not assume that parents were uninterested in helping their children at home. Parents showed awareness and interest of their role of engagement in both supervising academic progress of a child and helping with homework.

It was clear from the responses of most head teachers that usually only one parent helped with homework. One head teacher noted that often only one of the parents was engaged in not only homework and school meetings, but also in preparing the child for school and paying for any academic activities their children embarked on. Mothers were more engaged because fathers were away at work during the day. Only a few fathers appeared at school. One head teacher from school C, after a lot of clarification of the question by the researcher, explained:

You know parents more especially fathers have to look for wages daily. So i may call parents for the PTA meetings, but fathers will not come in good number compared to mothers, because they are looking for money. They come only after getting the money if they have to.(C1)

Another head teacher from school D added that:

The father is very busy. The father may follow up but sometimes go to work at night as a watchman (security guard). But that is why mothers mostly get engaged their children education.(D1)

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

We try to guide them because most are ignorant and we show them the importance of education so as to impart it to their children, but unfortunately few of them show up.(A1)

The head teacher at school C added that when a parent followed their children's progress at school, the child was motivated to learn as "Daddy might find out that I am not doing as I should in class." However, head teacher from school (I) complained that some parents were not really engaged in their children's learning in school. According to him, some parents saw teachers as baby-sitters for their children: They were:

Comfortable when the child is at school and will not come to school, and when asked to appear in school to discuss the progress of the child, they will not come, excusing themselves, "Teacher, I am not available for now. I will come when I get time." So we become the teacher and the parent to the child.(I1)

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

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

The findings showed that the parents felt welcome at the school and that they could approach the teachers to talk whenever there was a need. The teachers also welcomed parents coming to the school to talk with them. According to the head teachers, this was done to enable home-to-school communication. Yet the head teachers interviewed indicated that the majority of parents seldom visited schools and did not frequently talk to the ECE lead teachers. Lemmer and Van Wyk (2004) observe that home-to-school communication is one of the most important forms of parental engagement that is also poorly implemented in Masaba Sub-county. Moreover, a large number of parents in her study were not engaged in the most common TPA meetings with the school, had no conference with the teachers during the year and the communication was "not deep, frequent or detailed".

Teachers communicated to parents about the problems and progress of their children and emphasized it was their role to help solve their children's problems and ensure they are able learn. They also noted that the parents did not always respond well to verbal and written notes, which were the main form of communication from schools. The teachers recognized the need for communication in both directions, from school to home and home to school. Bronfenbrenner (1979) indicates that home-to-school communication, where parents contact teachers about their children's school life, correlates with positive child outcomes and growing up. While the teachers wanted parents to communicate with them, they felt that parents should take the initiative to approach them. They recognized that parents had useful information about their children's home circumstances, but they did not realize that they should emphasis in engaging regular frequent communication with

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the parents as a way of finding out about the pupils. As Lemmer and Van Wyk (2004) observe, the emphasis in schools is on school-to-home communication and teachers mostly invited parents when there was a problem with pupils and parents expected to be informed in case of problem with the school and in case of no information from school that the child is doing well.

Moreover, teachers did not use communication materials to engage in dialogue with parents regularly and only invited them to come and talk to them at the annual parent-teacher meetings. Clearly, engagement of the parents in many schools was only about obtaining their support and getting them to adopt the schools' values and goals.

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

Parents are supposed to come discuss issues encountered in their children's classes.(D1)

The head teacher of school F clarified:

We normally have parents of a class, for example, nursery class, come on their meeting day and talk with the teacher and when need arises we call the individual parents to come to school and talk to them about issues pertaining their children and what is expected of them.(F1)

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

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

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

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

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

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

The head teacher of school A explained:

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

Head teacher from school B added:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

It was clear from the responses of most head teachers, that usually only one parent attended meetings or helped with the homework. One teacher noted that often only one of the parents was engaged in school meetings, homework and in preparing the child for preschool education and transition. The mother was usually the more engaged parent as the father was away at work during the day. Only a few fathers came to the school.

Furthermore, it became clear from the interviews that parental engagement could be constrained by a lack of confidence. However, it became apparent that schools wanted parents to be engaged. Nevertheless, they favoured Bronfenbrenner's ecological system theory as evidenced by the limited opportunities the schools gave parents to be engaged. Therefore, some parents may have believed that schools and teachers wanted them to play a limited role in their children's education and accordingly, they delegated their responsibilities to the school. Most schools offered similar opportunities for parents to be engaged, but it was the specific theoretical stance of a school that determined the extra opportunities that it gave to the parents to be engaged.

Although some parents were educated and could thus help with homework, the interviews indicated that others were not always confident about how to help their children and were therefore not engaged in the homework at home at all. Certain parents lacked confidence in their ability to cope with primary school work, particularly in some subjects and may have avoided engagement in schoolwork, fearing exposing their ignorance would result in their children not believing that their parents were able to help them with schoolwork. Pupils in such homes did not perceive that their parents had a role to play in learning activities in the home.

Although most parents interviewed were married and lived with their spouses, often one parent was more engaged in the children's education or the parents took turns to be engaged. On a few occasions, both parents attended an event. A personal observation by the researcher was that no couples were ever present together at any school visited. In view of these parents' work and social commitments, this was to be expected. This perception was obviously a barrier to the engagement of both parents. Teachers noted that having only one parent engaged could lead to communication problems since they often only formed a relationship with one parent and the other parent may have little understanding of what was going on in the school.

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The information gathered through the interview schedule indicated that, parental engagement was not encouraging as the educational support given to the children were limited to the supply of only some aspects of the basic needs such as food and shelter. More so, high absenteeism in PTA meeting attendance, unwillingness to visit the school for enquiries of academic progress of a child by parents, inadequate supervision of children to study at home coupled with pupils' absenteeism were evident in the findings.

According to Karlsson (1996:28), parental support of their children is insufficient and parents do not generally discuss or participate in pupils' homework. One of the reasons for this is that pupils come from families where one or even more of the parents or caregivers is functionally illiterate and will thus feel unable to offer any meaningful support to the children.

The study also sought to explore the extent to which parental engagement affect preschoolers' access to early childhood education as presented in Table 4.2

Table 4.2: Parental engagement in preschoolers and access to preschool education

Parental engagement	N	Mean	Standard deviation
Parents always check their children's homework	43	3.53	1.202
Parents always want to know their children's academic progress	43	3.35	1.232
Parents support their children's in any academic activity they embark on	43	2.49	1.162
Parents guide their children when and where to do his/her studies at home	43	2.93	1.502
Parents come to their children's school regularly to find out their academic progress	43	2.53	1.334
Parents pay their children's school fees and other fees promptly	43	2.60	1.400
Parents participate actively in activities involving parents and teachers in school	43	2.86	1.226
Parents encourage their children to read always	43	2.77	1.342
Parents help their children when they have problems with their peers or friends	43	3.00	1.091
Parents attend school's Parent Teacher Association meetings of their children	43	2.79	1.081
Parents attend organized functions of the school such as speech and prize giving days	43	2.35	1.361
Parents arrange for private classes for their children	43	2.79	1.355
It's parents' job to explain tough assignments to their children	43	3.16	1.379
It's parents' duty to make sure their children understands their assignments	43	3.02	.597
Parents make sure that their children's homework gets done	43	2.88	1.434
Parents talk to their children about what they are learning	43	2.53	1.008
Parents get most of the information about their children's progress from report cards	43	3.72	.984
Valid N (listwise)	43	2.90	1.217

Source: Field data, 2017

According to the findings, it was clear that parental engagement that parents always check their children's homework, parents always want to know their children's academic progress, parents help their children when they have problems with their peers or friends, It's parents' job to explain tough assignments to their children, it's parents' duty to make sure their children understands their assignments and parents get most of the information about their children's progress from report cards affected preschoolers' access to early childhood education to a very great extent as expressed by a mean score of 3.53, 3.35, 3.00, 3.16, 3.02 and 3.72 respectively. The respondents also indicated that parental engagement based on;

Parents support their children's in any academic activity they embark on, parents guide their children when and where to do his/her studies at home, parents pay their children's school fees and other fees promptly, Parents participate actively in activities involving parents and teachers in school, parents encourage their children to read always, parents attend school's parent Teacher Association meetings of their children, Parents arrange for private classes for their children, parents make sure that their children's homework gets done and parents talk to their children about what they are learning affected preschoolers' access to early childhood education centers to a great extent as expressed by a mean score of 2.93, 2.53, 2.60, 2.86, 2.77, 2.79, 2.88 and 2.53 respectively.

It was also evident that parents rarely supported their children's in any academic activity they embark on and attended organized functions of the school such as speech and prize giving days affected preschoolers' access to early childhood education to a great extent as expressed by a mean score of 2.49 and 2.35 respectively, which reveals that most parents took their preschool children for educational tours which helped in improving their academic performance and transition. These educational tours help them know world science and acquire vocabularies (Barwelgen and Joyce 2004). From the above findings, parental engagement affects preschoolers' access to ECDE sometimes to a great extent as expressed by an aggregate score of 2.90 based on the five point likert scale in the questionnaire.

In order to get an overall picture of how ECDE Lead teachers rated the level of parents' engagement in their children's preschool education, the ratings for parents' engagement sub-variables in 4.27 above were aggregated into one index "Parent engage" where they were ranked and categorized into "engaged" and "Not engaged". Descriptive statistics on it, as against preschool accessibility of pupils is shown in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Parents' engagement Index against preschoolers' access to school

Category	Access to preschool education			V. Good	Total
	Poor	Fair	Good		
Not engaged	16.7	23.3%	5.8%	2.5%	48.3% %
Engaged	2.5%	11.7%	25.8%	11.7%	51.7%
Total	19.2 %	35.0%	31.6%	14.2%	100.0%

Source: Researcher, 2017

Table 4.3 show that parents who get engaged in their children's academic work and school activities had the highest percentage of their children accessing preschool education (11.7%) as against those who do not get engaged (2.5%). In other words, the majority of the children who poorly access preschool education were the children of the parents who do not engage themselves in their children's education (poor access = 16.7%).

To find more whether parents' engagement in preschoolers' education has a relationship with the preschoolers' access to education, the two numerical indexes (parent engagement and preschool access) were correlated using Pearson's moment correlation co-efficient as illustrated in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Pearson Parent Moment Correlation for Parents engagement and preschoolers' access to education

		Access to preschool education	Parents' Engagement
Access to preschool education	Pearson Sig. (2-tailed)	1	631*
	N	43	43
Parents' engagement Level	Pearson correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	631**	1
	N	43	43

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Source: Field data, 2017

Table 4.4, the Pearson correlation index obtained is 631 (r = 631). Being positive suggests positive correlation. This means pupils' performance rose with parents' engagement in preschoolers' preschool education. Its significance or p-value was

0.000 which is less than alpha 0.01($p < 0.01$). This implied that preschoolers' access to school and education was significantly related to parents' engagement in their preschoolers' education.

The study further qualitative findings revealed that parental engagement with their children education determines a lot preschoolers' access to school. It that found that a positive serious parental engagement was more important for children's education achievement by reducing learning difficulties. Parenting moderates the impact of parent involvement by influencing the extent of the parent-child interaction. Englund, Egeland and Collins (2008) also observed that the expected graduates had higher levels of parent involvement in early.

This indicates why for instance parents who are in professional work such as teaching, nursing and the other civil servants try to have the knowledge about what their children had been taught in school. They help their children to study at home, do their assignments and sometimes supplement what the teachers have thought them with what they know at home since private education is good as posted by Tooley, J., & Dixon, P. (2005). This factor of engagement and its significant impact in successful education achievement for the children if well handle has now driven those parents who cannot teach their children employ the services of other teachers to organize additional tuition for their children which in the long run help raise their preschool education transition. These statements from one of the parent confirmed this pronouncement made by teacher F:

"I am a nurse by profession and am not fully abreast with some of the topics in the syllabus currently since they are not related to my job as at now. So I have employed the services of a teacher who leaves in our vicinity to help my child in the subject areas my child did not perform to my satisfaction. And God being so good, my child has changed for the better in those subject areas he had difficulties" (F1)

5. CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

5.1. Conclusion on parental engagement on children's work and school activities:

Parents' engagement in children's academic work and school activities had the strongest relationship with the accessibility to preschool in Masaba North Sub-County ($r=0.631$). Low attendance to PTA meetings, inadequate visiting to the school to make enquiries concerning children's academic progress and general well-being, inability of parents to pay school fees and to ask the child what they learn at school and help them in homework, besides providing their educational needs demean preschoolers' accessibility to preschool. Parental engagement in schools was also characterized by diverse levels of interaction among the teachers and parents. The process of engaging parents was faced by challenges as highlighted in the findings. Parents continued to be engaged in their children's education to a limited extent only. However, head teachers, ECE lead teachers, sub-county education officer and parents acknowledged that more parental engagement was required to make school accessibility easy so as to improve the quality of their children's education.

5.2. Recommendation on parental engagement on children's work and school activities:

The study recommended that parents should sacrifice themselves to pay the school fees accordingly and improve the level of control and care of their children, show more interest and concern in the academic work of their children by providing conducive atmosphere for studies at home, providing materials for studies and helping the children in their studies and homework. The current study also recommends that a parental engagement programme suited to public ECDE schools in Kenya. However, the improvement of partnerships is a process that requires the investment of time, resources and efforts. The implementation of such a programme can enable teachers and parents to embrace parental engagement as school practice and can help them to become more confident and able to play a meaningful role in the school, which can benefit all the parties involved, with regard to overcoming the limited opportunities and weaknesses in the schooling of some learners.

5.3 Suggestion for Future Research:

The findings of this study on exploring selected parental variables as determinants of preschoolers' access to early childhood education, was limited to a geographical area; Masaba Sub-County in Nyamira County in the Republic of Kenya and should be considered in light of this particular context. There are likely to be variations between this context and settings in other parts of the country where determinants for preschoolers' access to early childhood education vary,

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which makes it likely that the determinants for preschool access differ in many cases. Therefore, the researcher recommends a further research to be carried out with larger sample size from preschools throughout the forty seven counties of the country on; preschool environment, as another factor that influence preschools accessibility by learners.

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