Relationship between Parental Attitudes towards Early Childhood Education 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 attitudes towards early childhood education and pre-schoolers access to early childhood education in Kenya. The objective of the study was to find out the relationship between parental attitudes towards early childhood education 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 revealed that most Parents' had a negative attitude towards accessibility to preschool by the learners. It was concluded that mechanisms should be put in place to deal with this negative attitude and ensure that parents and guardians are very positive with their children's accessibility to schools.It was recommended that policy makers and stakeholders come up with the course for adult literacy as a pre-requisite tool for good accessibility to preschools. The present study also recommends the government should support children whose parents have negative attitude towards education thus denying them education. 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), head teachers, preschool, parents.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study:

Globally, the role of Education in improving the quality of life was well documented by various studies (Bruns, Mingat, and Rakotomala, 2003; and Psacharopoulos and Patrinos, 2004). Hence, ensuring the access to quality basic education to all children had been underscored by various international conventions, notably: The World Declaration for Education for

All (EFA), The Millennium Declaration, the Dakar Framework for Action in 2000 and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (UNESCO, 2005). In addressing preschoolers' access to quality education, full enrolment, transition and retention of children in Early Childhood Development and Education Centres was globally perceived as a greater step towards achieving education for all. However, with a lot of concern, there had been low preschool enrolment and retention in Sub Saharan Africa for over the last two decade (UNESCO, 2010).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1.2 Statement of the Problem:

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

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

1.3 Purpose of the Study:

The purpose of the study was to explore the relationship between Parental attitudes towards Early Childhood Education 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 attitudes towards Early Childhood Education 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:
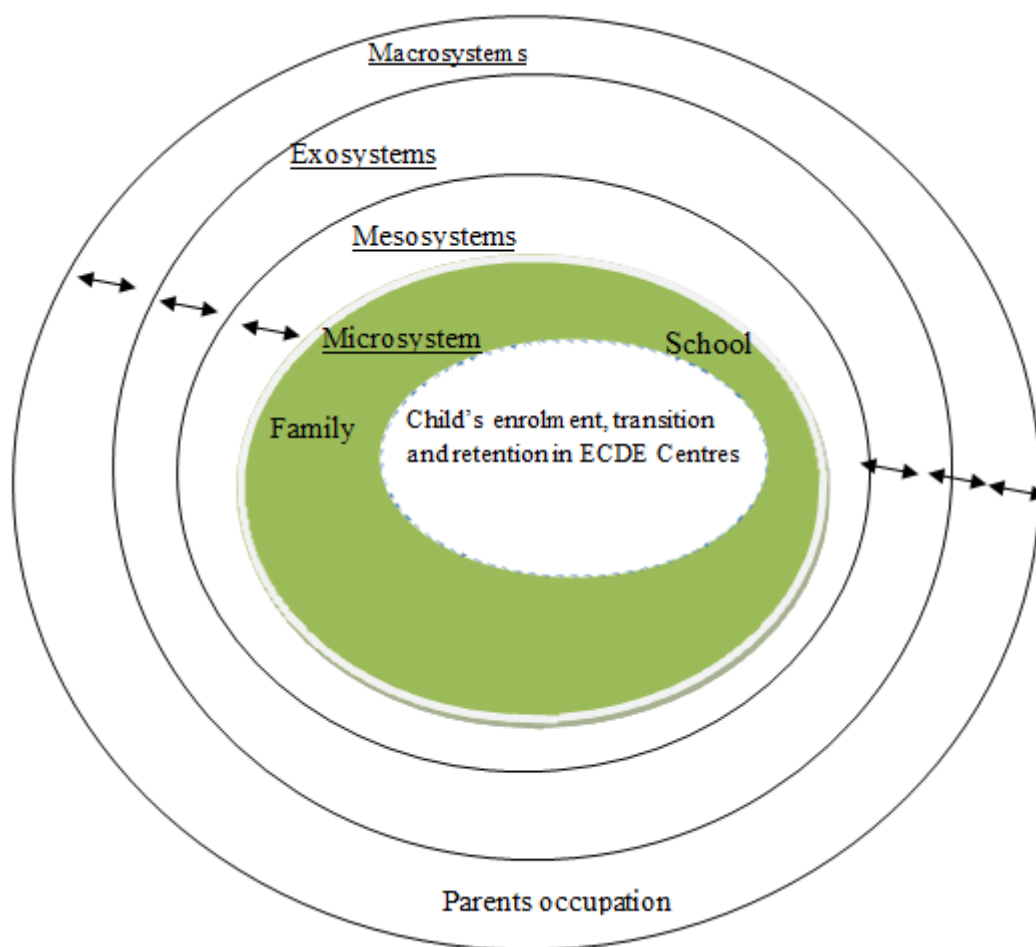
Source: Santrock (2007)

Figure 1.1: Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory

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

The Mesosystem comprises links between Microsystems, such as home, school, and neighborhood. The Mesosystem was shaped by the various connections between and among individuals, objects, and circumstances (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

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

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

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

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

1.7.2 Emile Durkeim's Functional Theory:

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

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

understand for this theory included: family, government, economy, media, education, and religion. According to functionalism, an institution only exists because it serves a vital role in the functioning of the society. If it no longer serves a role, an institution dies away. When new needs evolve or emerge, new institutions were created to meet them.

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

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

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

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

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Parental Attitude and students' Access to Education:

Reichmann (2012) conducted a qualitative longitudinal study designed in Germany to evaluate the transition programmes that were supportive to learners. The data were collected using semi-structured interviews. Parents were interviewed about different aspects of transition including their view and attitude on their child's transition and the impact of the transition on their own emotional setting. Finding showed that throughout the transition process, all parents go through a wide range of emotions which would affect pupil's transition. The reviewed study differs with the current study in that the study was conducted in Europe, a developed nation using qualitative longitudinal approach while the study carried out in Kenya, a developing nation using qualitative and quantitative methods. The two study locations were perceived to differ in terms of parental society's need and expectations from early childhood education. Hence, the study seek to establish if there were any implications of the reviewed study findings to the Kenyan's cultural context.

Armstrong, Kane, O'Sullivan and Kelly (2010) study was based on four main phases of research activity. These phases included project scoping, data and policy review, survey design and implementation, and analysis and reporting. The questionnaire the main survey element of this research, focus groups and in-depth interviews were held with parents of children with Special Educational Needs (SEN), teachers and Special Educational Needs Organisers (SENOs). Findings showed that almost 90 per cent of parents thought that their child attended the right type of school for their needs. The main reason provided was that parents felt their child's teacher had a good understanding of their needs. Majority of parents also reported that placement for their child had been easy, although a substantial minority (20%) reported difficulties. The study further established that the access to school was not a real issue to children. While Armstrong et al (2012) study sampled parents of children with Special Educational Needs (SEN), teachers and Special Educational Needs Organisers (SENOs) the current study a sample of parents and teachers from preschools without special need children.

Diamond and LeFurgy (2010) conducted a study to establish parental perspectives on their children's education. The study sampled one hundred forty-one parents of preschool children with and without disabilities, enrolled in integrated or self-contained classrooms. Parents' responses on the parental perspectives on Integration Questionnaire, administered at the beginning of the school year, were factor analyzed. The revised instrument was then used to assess parents' attitudes at the end of the school year. The study established that all parents held generally positive attitudes toward their children's integration. By the end of the school year, the study established that parents whose children had participated in an integrated program held more positive attitudes toward integration than those parents whose children had not participated in this type of class. Diamond and LeFurgy (2010) study differs with the study in that it sampled parents of preschool children with and without disabilities unlike the current study that sample all children in Early Childhood Education centres without disabilities.

In USA, Hannah (2014) conducted a study to evaluate parental satisfaction and anxiety regarding high school educational experiences of their child. Parent participants were reached through local and national autism support groups, in addition to support groups based in social media. The parental survey included an adaptation of the State Trait Anxiety Inventory, Likert scale questions regarding satisfaction, and demographic questions. The study established that the baseline anxiety was significantly lower than their anxiety regarding their child's school experiences. Overall, parents tended to be satisfied with teacher qualities, but less satisfied with the education experience as a whole. The study generally established a positive relationship between parental satisfaction and children's access to education. The study however was conducted among secondary students unlike the present study that was conducted among preschoolers.

In India, Samal (2012) conducted a study which was aimed at assessing attitude of parents towards the education and schooling of their children. The study analysed the data from 145 parents, who had one or more than one school going children. A 23-item questionnaire was used for collecting data along with personal interview. The respondents were required to indicate their agreement or disagreement with each of the statements about children's education in a four-point Likert type scale. Mean scores and 't' test were used to analyze the study. The findings showed that the overall attitude of the respondents was moderately favourable and positive towards schooling and education of their children. The results also indicated that there was no significant difference in the attitude of tribal and non-tribal parents. While study was carried out among parents in early childhood programme, it was quantitative in nature while the current study used both qualitative and quantitative techniques. The present study was perceived to expand the reviewed study findings with the respondent's attitude, feeling and opinions which was lucking in the reviewed study.

Al Neyadi (2015) conducted a study to examine parents' attitude on children's general education. Participants for the study included 100 parents (50 parents of children with disabilities from a rehabilitation centers, and 50 parents of children without disabilities). The research employed a quantitative analysis to answer the research questions. The results of this study indicated that overall parents' attitude had a positive effect on children's education. Despite the relevance of the reviewed study to the current study, the study was conducted among learners with disabilities unlike the present study that was conducted among preschoolers in regular schools. At the same time the study employed qualitative approach unlike the present study that employ concurrent triangulation approach.

TNS Social research (September 2003-June 2004) stated that parents' attitudes towards education were generally very positive. The majority (97%) of parents agreed that a good education would help their child to get ahead in life while 93% of parents thought the qualifications were important to their child's future and 90% also agreed that children learn important life skills at school. The reviewed study sought to identify whether there were any differences in parents' attitudes towards children's school attendance. The study in general did not identified any differences in the attitudes of parents in the general population. The findings further indicated that most parents showed considerable interest in their child's school which positively influenced their children's school attendance. Data was collected in the reviewed study using document analysis where historical data was reviewed unlike the present study that used both primary and secondary sources of data collection.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research design:

This study adopted concurrent triangulation approach. According to Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Tuner, (2007) concurrent triangulation research involves the mixing of different methodological viewpoints. Concurrent triangulation approach is useful when one approach alone is inadequate. The use of both approaches (qualitative and quantitative) was perceived to

increase the overall strength of a study and allows for the findings' richness in both depth and width in addressing the research problem (Creswell 2009). With concurrent triangulations, findings were likely to be more trustworthy and relevant than if separate approaches were used (Creswell 2009). Thus, the method was used for the purpose of triangulation which offsets the weaknesses of single research methods and provides better quality data. Within concurrent triangulation approach, the study in particular used Concurrent Triangulation design that involved the use of both quantitative and qualitative approaches. This design had a single phase-timing hence referred to as the "concurrent triangulation design" (Creswell, 2014). It generally involved the concurrent, but separate, collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data so that the researcher could best understand the research problem. A frame of concurrent triangulation research design was shown in figure 1.3.
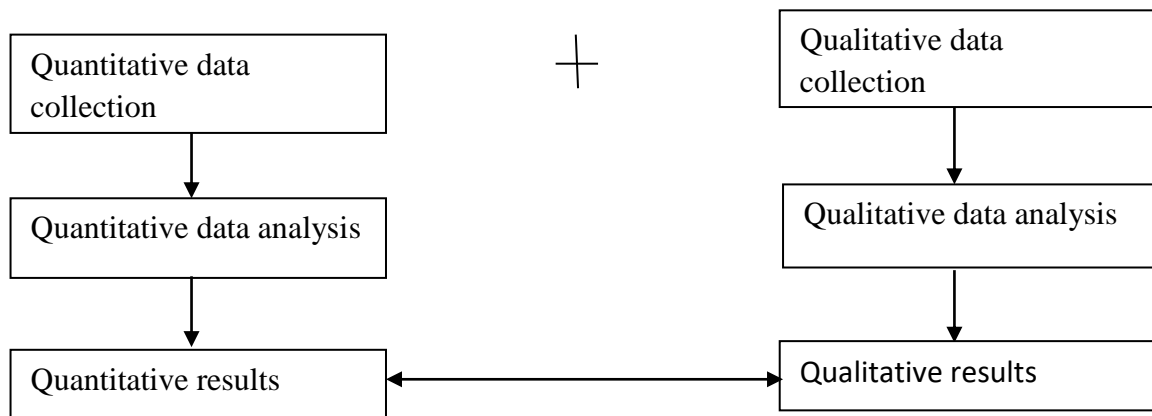
Adopted from: The Qualitative Report Volume 17 Number 1 January 2012

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

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

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

3.2 Study area:

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

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3.3 Target Population:

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

Table 3.1: Target Population

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

Source: researcher, 2017

3.4 Sampling Techniques and Sample size:

3.4.1 Sampling Techniques:

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

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

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

3.4.2 Sample Size:

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

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

Table 3.2: Target population and Sample Size

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

Source: Researcher, 2017

3.5 Research Instruments:

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

3.5.1 Questionnaires for parents:

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

3.5.2 Questionnaires for lead teachers:

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

3.5.3 Interview schedules for primary school head teachers:

Interviews were one of the most common methods of data collection in concurrent triangulation especially when handling qualitative approaches (Andrew and Halcomb, 2009). The study employed unstructured and semi-structured interviews. Interviews were conducted to primary school head teachers. Interview schedules took an average of one hour. The interviews were aimed at gathering the respondents' views on how parental factors relates preschoolers' access to preschool education. Interview schedules were suitable for this study because they allowed the researcher to obtain

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information that cannot be directly observed and to gain control over the line of questioning (Oso and Onen, 2011). The interviews were conducted by the researcher in each head teacher's school in the sample size. The researcher used a smart phone to record the conversation and thereafter wrote down the findings in a note book. All the interviews were audio-taped and transcribed verbatim for analysis by the researcher to allow for immersion in the data and to maintain coherence and connections in the content (Oso and Onen, 2011).

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

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

3.5.4 Interview schedules for sub-county education officer:

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

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

3.6 Data Collection Procedures:

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

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

Collection of qualitative and quantitative data was done, a sequential mixed method was used. Relevant qualitative and quantitative data were used to obtain information. Questionnaire was generated based on relevant perceived parental factors and access to preschool in quantitative data collection. Thereafter, questionnaires were administered to each of the participants by the researcher to complete by filling the option considered most appropriate to the request being

demanded. The collected questionnaires were read before the respondents so as to ensure the accuracy of the information provided by the respondents and effect necessary corrections. This prevented the data from missing. After the collecting the questionnaires, the researcher ensured that all the booklets of the participants were checked so that no one was left out.

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

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

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

3.7 Data Analysis:

Data was analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively.

3.7.1 Quantitative data analysis:

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

Table 3.3: Quantitative Data Analysis Matrix

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

To establish the relationship between parental attitude towards early childhood education and preschoolers' access to Early Childhood education.	Questionnaires, interviews and document analysis. IV-Parental attitude/ DV- Access to preschool education	Frequency counts and percentages and regression analysis

Source: researcher, 2017

3.7.2 Qualitative data analysis:

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

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

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

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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. Parental Attitude towards early childhood education and Preschoolers access to early childhood education Centres:

This part of the study attempted to unravel parental attitude from the viewpoint of the parents (respondents), with preschoolers and implications of those parental attitude were drawn. Parental attitude were assessed from the point of view of respondents to aid comparisons. These were done through approval ratings on a scale of 5 to the statements assessing parental attitude (wherein 1- Strongly Disagree, 2 – Disagree, 3- Undecided, 4- Agree, and   5- Strongly Agree). Table 4.1 presents the details.

Table 4.1: Parental Attitude and access to preschool

Parental Attitude	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
A good preschool education will help my child to get ahead in life.	76	3.64	1.163
Preschool education will help my child for his all-round development.	76	3.62	1.166
It does not matter whether a child starts going to school early or late in life.	76	2.38	1.376
My child learns important life skills at preschool centers.	76	3.66	1.161
Whatever is taught in school can easily be carried out at home.	76	3.50	1.227
I am interested to send my child to school every day and discourage absence even for a day.	76	3.84	1.108
Learning programmes in school will not teach my child the practical skills to solve real life problems.	76	2.41	1.358
Schooling will make my child less productive in the sense he/she will be irrelevant to adopt family occupation.	76	2.59	1.435
Education will help my child for future opportunities and challenges in life.	76	3.54	1.301
Most of the things my child learns at school are not relevant to real life.	76	2.39	1.396
It gives me satisfaction that my child is able to avail the benefit of schooling.	76	4.59	7.243
Schooling takes away valuable time from my child's life which could have otherwise been spent in earning/jobs.	76	2.83	1.350
Schooling makes my child lazy and unresponsive to family problems.	76	2.49	1.270
Valid N (listwise)	76	3.19	1.735

Source: Field data, 2017

It clearly in Table 4.1 that the parents had generally a moderately high approval rating (overall approval indicator value = 3.19 on a maximum scale of 5) in respect of their parental attitude towards preschoolers and EDCE. The approval ratings specifically ranged between 2.38 (close to Disagree) and 4.59 (close to Strongly Agree).

The parents strongly agreed the fact that they were satisfied that their children are able to avail the benefit of schooling later in life by 4.59 (7.243). The parents also agreed the fact that "I am interested to send my child to school every day and

discourage absence even for a day", with a mean of 3.84 and std Deviation (1.108). Parents who were interviewed agreed by indicating a mean of 3.66 and std DV of 1.227 that their children learnt important life skills at preschool centers. A variable that was to identify parental attitude towards ECDE identified with a mean of 3.64 represented, "A good preschool education will help my child to get ahead in life", as almost the same agreement rating 3.62 which represented, "Preschool education will help my child for his all-round development", and also 3.54 which is closely to agree was represented by, "Education will help my child for future opportunities and challenges in life" while also, a mean of 3.50 (1.227) was also under the same category with available, "Whatever is taught in school can easily be carried out at home". It was different by other parents disagreed with some variables by indicating a mean of 2.38, 2.41 and 2.39, representing, "It does not matter whether a child starts going to school early or late in life", "Learning programmes in school will not teach my child the practical skills to solve real life problems" and "Most of the things my child learns at school are not relevant to real life", respectively, showing that some parents never gave much consideration to ECDE. Still some of parents almost to the rating of a scale of three were undecided with the fact that, "Schooling will make my child less productive in the sense he/she will be irrelevant to adopt family occupation", which was an indication that some preschooler were real affected with the negative attitude their parents had towards ECDE, which resulted to barricading smooth learning of preschoolers. A mean of 2.49 (1.270), this implies that the level of parental attitude towards ECDE was moderately low regard for the fact parents were not decided whether, schooling makes their children lazy and unresponsive to family problems, which could have contributed to determine the accessibility of children in ECDE. Further the researcher wanted to establish the extent to which parental attitude towards ECDE affected the accessibility of preschoolers to education. The relationship between parental attitude and preschoolers' access to school was presented in Table 4.2:

Table 4.2: Pearson Parent Moment Correlation for parental attitude and preschoolers' access to school

		Access to preschool education	Parental attitude to ECDE
Access to preschool education	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	1 76	0.493 0.031 76
Parental attitude to ECDE	Pearson correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	0.493 0.031 76	1 76

Source: Field data, 2017

The correlation coefficient between parental attitude and preschoolers' access to school is r = 0.493, implying that there is a weak positive relationship between parental attitude and preschoolers' access to school. This implies that the change in parental attitude, affect preschoolers' access to school slightly.

In addition, there was a negative attitude towards education in some parts of the Masaba North sub-county and in some parents was identified. This world is open to those individuals who are educated, and they are able to achieve whatever they want from their lives. Because, the independence aspect if living includes freedom to choose lifestyle, having financial stability, and having multiple professional and personal options to choose from. The participants insisted that education should provide opportunities for children to become independent.

Ability to participate in the society was revealed as a purpose of education for participants was personal growth. Therefore, education as an instrument to better child's future and to achieve life skills. The only way to succeed in life is by achieving education according to the participants of this study revealed. Teachers communicated to parents about the problems and progress of their children and emphasized it was their role to help solve children's problems and ensure they are able to read and write.

Parents in areas such as Nyamira County made a living through farming and usually discontinued their children's schooling temporarily during peak seasons so that they could work on the farm. Since such parents could not afford hired labour and they perceived that there were few chances of employment after school, they did not see the value of further education after completing primary school. The head teacher of school E explained:

It is poverty in the majority of the parents in public schools…. Here, now in this school, there are parents who take children to school because it's being done by everybody else and some of them don't care. They belief that even if they don't take their children to school, that will not matter in their future because after all they also didn't attend school at their time and live continues.(E1)

The head teacher of school B concurred, adding that the negative attitude generally caused the parents to be disinterested in education:

According to their children, these parents do not care and their children to lead a care-free life. If you hear about their problems most are frustrated because of the way they were brought up themselves in their homes, where their parents see schooling as waste of time that they could have done other social manual at home. For instance boys to take care of cattle and girl to help their mother in kitchen.(B1)

The majority of mothers and other female caregivers were engaged in education more than the fathers regardless of family or marital status were. A teacher from school G explained:

When the teacher happens to send the child home to fetch parents mostly the mothers will come because fathers will not come to school because they have that attitude that their(fathers) work is to provide food and security at home only, other engagements with education for preschoolers should be the responsibility of mothers.(G1)

Participant P also state that in most part, fathers were not very engaged in the schools. He noted that fathers left the care of children to the mothers had a strategy for involving all parents:

We have a penalty for parents who do not attend. We agreed together with all parents and head teachers that anyone who would not come to school meetings must pay a fine of fifty shillings. Since we all were together in agreement, all parents always do come. This has also made them willing to visit the school any time when there are individual issues to do with their children. Even fathers must come if the mother can't attend now!(P)

Identifying the hindrances to parental attitude was a major step towards developing effective home-school partnerships (Gettinger and Geutschow, 1998). These factors included limitations caused by external barriers which were beyond the parent's control and personal obstacles. External barriers were mainly those that existed at the school while individual obstacles were the result of the parent's socio-economic situation, work patterns and personal attitudes about what successful education outcome will entail in the future of a child. This section discusses the range of factors that the participants identified that limited parents' ability to a good attitude in different aspects of their children's education.

Single mothers were more numerous than single fathers. Most were living in the slums in the towns. The same teacher added: "Most have no fathers, maybe the mother never got married or the father left them and some died. Also, single fathers don't stay unmarried long before they remarry and the child lives with a stepmother."

Single fathers did not bother much about the child once he or she was fed. One teacher observed that children living with the father were unkempt when they came to school because the father was only concerned with eating and not with washing clothes and other matters unlike the situation of single mothers. Children of single mothers were more likely to perform better than those of single fathers. Another teacher remarked: "Children of single mothers perform better than those of single fathers because mothers encourage their children and are together most of the time at home unlike the fathers."

The teachers interviewed regarded some parents as poor role models for their children and this resulted in the poor learning habits of children at school. A teacher from school C informed the researcher of parents who sent their children to the farms to work or to look after cattle, thereby preventing the child from going to school or from doing homework. He explained that due to poverty, most parents did not care for their children as they were supposed to and this created a bad relationship between a child and its parents in this community. At times, a child was left to look after the younger children, while the parents were at work.

It was clear from the findings that, while most families were nuclear households, single parents headed many homes. Some of these single parent families were extended (that is, consisting of more than two generations) which

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helped to counteract the negative effects of disrupted nuclear family units. Teachers in the confirmed earlier observations concerning parental engagement in school events: parents were so busy that it was difficult for them to visit schools. The reason was that many of the parents were employed. However, their jobs were low wage and low skilled employment types that offered few benefits and little security. Thus, visiting the school required much planning to take time off from work to arrange for the visit. Moreover, parents felt anxious about visiting the school perceiving schools as institutions where they went only when there were problems to do with their children. Given such issues, it was not surmising that parents were always too busy to attend school events.

5. CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATION AND SUGGESTION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

5.1 Conclusion on Parental Attitude towards early childhood education and Preschoolers access to early childhood education Centres:

Parents' attitude proved to have a weak positive relationship with the accessibility to preschool by the children to some extent (r=0.493). However the relationship was not too strong and therefore cannot be a strong determinant of children's accessibility to preschool centers in Masaba North Sub-County. This was because the parents who normally were identified to have negative attitude to education were driven by poverty.

5.2 Recommendations on Parental Attitude towards early childhood education and Preschoolers access to early childhood education Centres:

Government should extend her tentacles in the school feeding programme, provision of books, school uniform and other educational facilities to serve as a solid support for the children whose negative parental attitude towards education has denied them these needs so as to have every child can access education with ease.

5.3 Suggestion for Future Research:

The study recommends a research to be carried out with large sized sample on 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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