

The Influence of Parental Education in Pre-School Preference in Nyamira Division – Nyamira County Kenya

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Abstract: This study determines the parental level education in pre-school preference for their young children in Nyamira division Kenya. The objective of this study was to determine the parents' level of education that influences pre-school preference. The target population was 79 head teachers, 227 pre-school teachers and 4200 parents whose children are in pre-school from both public and private schools. The study adopted descriptive research design and was informed by the Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory of human development. The sampled population was done by 10%, Mugenda and Mugenda (2006) the data collection instruments were questionnaires and interview schedules. Simple random techniques and purpose techniques were used to select primary school head teacher, pre-school teachers and parents. Using simple random sampling techniques 10% of the parents were selected while using purposive sampling primary school head teachers and pre-school head teachers were selected by 10%. The data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistics was used to describe and summarize data in form of frequencies distribution tables and means. The inferential statistics was used to make inference and draw conclusions. The findings were that parents with a minimum of secondary school education had their children admitted in private, expensive but well performing pre-schools. Those who are with low education attainment preferred to admit their children in cheap, low performing or average performing pre-schools. The recommendations were that parents should be enlightened on the importance of pre-school education and being taken to workshops to improve their literacy. The key recommendation was that the school stakeholders such as parents, Directors and the government should provide work in collaboration to provide learners with best learning environment regardless of the educational background of their parents.

Keywords: Parental level education, secondary school education, descriptive statistics, sampling primary school.

1. INTRODUCTION

Parental level of education is defined as the education level of the most highly educated parent who lives with the child, NCCP (2016) parental level of education can influence the willingness and capability of parents to prefer the best and quality schools for their children's education, Bogenschneider,(1997)

UNESCO (2008) describes the situation of parents in several; countries of the Arab region that 40% of those over 15 years nearly to 70 million people are illiterate. These countries include: Algeria, Bahrain, Djibout, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait and Lebanon. Five out of these countries in Arab region claim that the majority of the individuals are illiterate. In (2003), Yemen's illiteracy was 53.6%, Morocco was 51.2%, Egypt was 44.7%, Sudan was 42.3% and Algeria 33.3%. This high rate of illiteracy puts parents in being struggling in preferring the pre-school for their children.

Mary (2005,2012) in United Nations education scientific and cultural organizations argues that children who lack access to pre-school services tend to come from this communities which are disadvantaged in terms of illiteracy such as in semi-

arid and slum areas. Failure of parents to accomplish their responsibilities lays a weak academic foundation for their children and may drop out of school. The education status of the parents has made them uninvolved, uninterested and not valuing and encouraging their children's success.

Michelle and Ayana (2006) in Niger noted that even in the village where many parents are illiterate and many are serving or sometimes everyday working hard all day in the fields, attitudes of parents who are educated and those who are not conspicuously are different. In their research they noted that parents who are educated had better attitude towards their children's schooling than the illiterate ones.

Rothstein (2004) argues that the level of parent's education has considerable influence on the cognitive ability of their children. Parents who are educated with a college degree are better able to help their children with their homework than parents who are less educated. Educators for a long time have observed that homework exacerbates the academic difference between middle class and working class children largely because middle class parents are likely to assist affecting with homework. The more educated parents are likely to buy books for their kids and also engage in conversations with their children that are taught provoking thus helping the kids to figure out things on their own than less educated parents. Various studies confirm a positive correlation between parent's level of education and their academic achievements of their children. Cognitive skills of children are even more influenced by the mother's level of education because mothers are more likely to spend more time with their children than fathers.

UNESCO (2000) describes the illiteracy level of parents that in Kenya and Africa is high. It continues to note that 142,000,000 African adults are illiterate. Sammmos (2007) indicates that virtually all successful programs are influenced by education and participation. Saadia (2010) indicates that illiterate parents denied their children enrollment in pre-school centers in order to stay at home with their siblings as parents went to fetch water and perform other house hold chores.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

The general research problem addressed in this study is that despite the early childhood policy (2006) stipulating the tenants of quality pre-school education and unifying the curriculum which was meant to provide equal chances of success. Many parents still struggle with their level of education to prefer or choose pre-schools for their children to learn. Available studies show that some parents take their children to public pre-schools other than private even though they are far and others take their children to private even though they are far from home, Michelle and Ayana (2006) some study also fulfils that some parents leave their children at home to look after their young siblings to hustle for their daily bread Saadia (2010). The study sought to investigate the preferred pre-schools for children of parents with minimum secondary school level and less than secondary school level.

GENERAL OBJECTIVE:

Influence of parental level of education on pre-school preference in Nyamira division, Nyamira county

Specific objective of the study will be:

To investigate the influence of high and low level of parents' education on pre-school preference.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction:

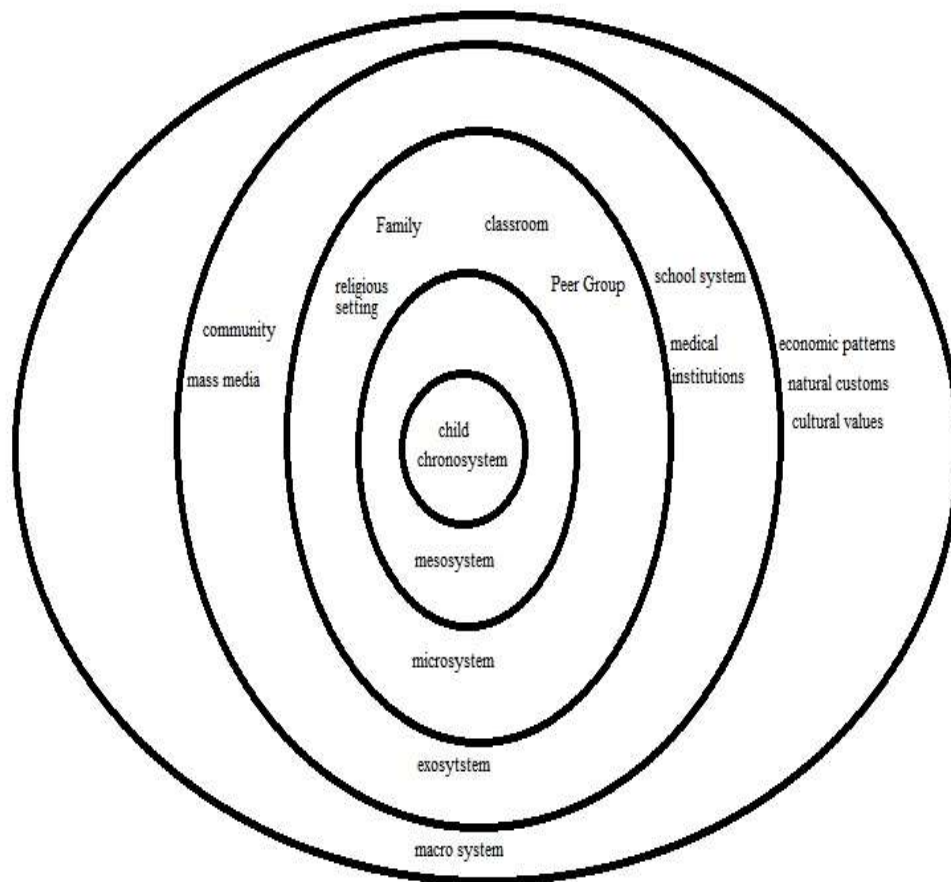
This section reviewed several literatures on, past studies which assisted the researcher with the guideline on how to study the objective and to assess the contributions towards the objectives. To intensify a complete analysis, the study looked into some issues that influence the pre-school preference for the young children. This was done with the purpose of establishing the reasons that make the movement of children from one school to the other and yet there are some schools which are near and some are far.

2.2 Theoretical review:

This study is focused on the most and important literature related to the research question. This was a review of theories which were relevant to the study objective.

2.3 Parent's level of education:

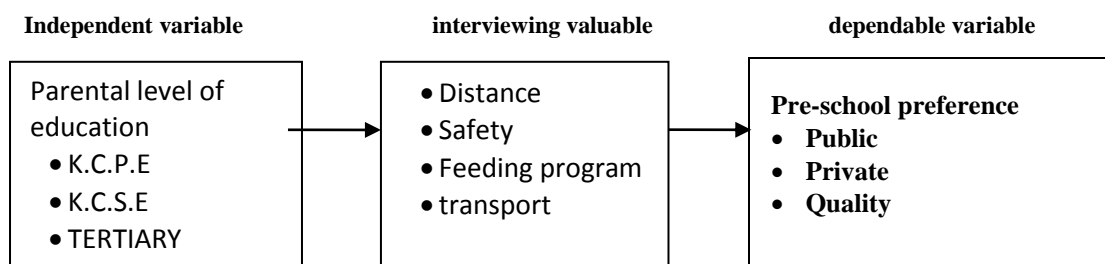
According to Michelle and Ayana (2006) they describe that villages where many parents are illiterate and many are sometimes serving in the villages working hard in their fields have different attitudes towards pre-school education compared to those parents who are educated. They noted that parents who are educated had better attitude towards their children's schooling than the illiterate parents. Urie Bronfenbrenner's theory also argues that it is only by examining the child in relation to his or her context that one can understand how a child develops. It also continues to argue that children are learning and gathering their knowledge from various places and areas in their lives. Day to day activities and places where children spend time have a huge influence in them learning the various cultures and their own developments. Bronfenbrenner (1977-2005))



Uri bronfenbrenner's theory of ecological systems of development.

2.4 Conceptual framework:

A conceptual framework is a model of presentation where a researcher represents the relationship between independent, dependent and intervening variables. This study shows the conceptual framework of parents and the preferring factors for pre-school education, Orodho (2003)



The main variable of this study is the pre-school preference. This variable is considered as a dependable variable which depends on the independent variables. The most influencing factor here is that through parental education the preferred schools will be highly performing schools with quality education for the pre-school children. This will make the success of the stipulated objectives hence producing the best children in future.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopted descriptive design. This contains both quantitative and qualitative data analysis procedures. This study adopted descriptive research design because the researcher easily inferred the relationship that existed between the variables that the researcher used in the study. The research study used the target population of 79 primary school head teacher, 227 preschool teachers and 4200 parents. Sampling was done by the use of 10%. The findings of the study were used to make correlation on the basis of the data collected.

4. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Introduction:

As the objectives of the study was to investigate the influence of parental level of education on preschool preference in Nyamira Division, the study was limited only to be carried in the division later than in the whole county. The study was only limited to the education of parents giving the priorities to the high or low level of education in terms of classes, that is kepe, secondary or tertiary education. All these variables were captured in the questionnaire and interview schedules which were well constructed to capture the required information

4.2 Background information:

The study was carried in Nyamira Division Nyamira county Kenya. In the look of study among the parent respondent it was 85.9%, where by 59.3% were male and 40.7% were female. In the side of the primary school head teachers it was 100% while for the preschool teachers the response was also 100%. In the parents level of education it was noted that 41.0% were secondary school certificate, 33.5% were tertiary/university certificate and 25.5% were primary school certificate. It concluded that most of the respondents (parents) had attained secondary and tertiary/ university level of education.

4.2.1 Response rate:

The study achieved 85.9% response return rate of parents in which out of the anticipated parents 361 of them dully filled the questionnaire. As for the primary school head teachers and preschool teachers the study achieved 100% response return rate as all of the 23 preschool teachers and 8 primary school head teachers took part in the study. These response return rate was achieved because the researcher administered the instruments to each respondents in person spending with them several hours to ensure that each and every respondent took part in the study.

Table 4.1 response rate

Respondent	Frequency	Percentage
Parents	361	86.9%
Head Teachers	8	100%
Preschool Teachers	23	100%

4.2.2 Response to gender:

Considering response by gender, majority of the parents whose children are in preschool 59.3% were male while 40.7% were female. The study also established that majority of the primary head teachers were 75% male and 25% female. While the preschool teachers, 91.3% were female and 8.7% were male. This study shows that male head teachers were more than female head teachers and female preschool teachers are high compared to male preschool teachers. This is contrary to that of KIHBS (2006) Kenya.

Table 4.2 Response by gender

	Respondent Category	Frequency	Percentage
Parents	Male	214	59.3%
	Female	147	40.7%
	Total	361	100%
Head teachers	Male	6	75%
	Female	2	25%
	Total	8	100
Preschool Teachers	Male	02	8.7%
	Female	21	91.3%
	Total	23	100%

4.3 Influence of parent`s level of education in preschool preference:

The study sought to investigate the influence of parental level of education on preschool preferences. Respondents (parents) were therefore asked to indicate their level of education and the preferred preschool for their children.

Table4.3.1 Education level

Education Level	Frequency	Percentages
Primary school certificate	92	25.5
Secondary certificate	148	41.0
Tertiary/ University certificate	121	33.5
Total	361	100.0

The findings from the table shows that most of the respondents (parents) 41.0% had attained secondary school certificate, 33.5% had attained tertiary/ university education and 25.5% had only primary school certificate. This shows that majority of the respondents cumulatively at 74.5% (269) whose children were in preschools had a minimum of secondary school education, hence were well educated and knew the significance of enrolling their children in preschools. It was therefore imperative to investigate the influence of parental level of education on the choice of preschools.

The study also sought to investigate the preferred preschool for children of parents with minimum of secondary schools education. Respondents (parents) were therefore asked to indicate the type of preschools based on type, performance and cost that their children were admitted.

Table 4.3.2 shows the response.

Table 4. 3.2 Preschools for children of parents with minimum of secondary education (N=269)

Category of Preschools	Frequency	Percentages
Expensive	149	55.4
Cheap	36	13.4
Private	201	74.7
Public	69	25.6
Well performing	196	72.9
Averagely performing	63	23.4
Low performing	11	04.0

Source: Researcher's data 2015

According to Table 4.3.2 almost three quarters of the parents (74.7%) with above secondary school education had their children admitted in private schools, 72.9% indicated that their children were learning in well performing preschools, while 55.4% had their children in expensive schools. On the other hand, only 13.4%, 4%, 23.4% and 25.6% of these parents admitted their children in cheap, low performing, averagely performing and public schools respectively. This shows that majority of well educated parents preferred well performing, expensive private schools. Michelle and Ayana

(2006) in their research also noted that parents who are educated had better attitudes towards their children's schooling than the illiterate ones.

The study also sought to investigate the preferred preschool for children of parents with less than secondary schools education. Respondents (parents) were therefore asked to indicate the type of preschools based on type, performance and cost that their children were admitted.

Table 4.3.3 shows the response.

Table 4. 3.3 Preschools for children of parents with less than secondary school education (N=92)

Category of Preschools	Frequency	Percentages
Expensive	27	29.3
Cheap	56	60.1
Private	23	25.0
Public	69	75.0
Well performing	42	45.7
Averagely performing	63	68.5
Low performing	18	19.6

Source: Researcher's data 2015

Table 4.3.3 shows that majority of the respondents (60.1%) had their children in cheap preschools, 75% had their children in public preschools while, 68.5% indicated averagely performing preschools. Although they had less than secondary schools education, almost half of the respondents preferred well performing schools. Only 29.3% and 25% of the parents with less than secondary school education chose expensive and private preschools for their children respectively. From these findings, it was inferred that majority of parents with low education background had preferred cheap, averagely performed public secondary schools an indicator that they were not so much concerned with their children's education. Similarly, Saadia (2010) found that illiterate parents denied their children enrolment in preschool centers and encouraged them to stay at home with their siblings as parents went to fetch water and perform other household chores.

4.4 Correlation between Parental Level of Education and Choice of preschools:

To establish the relationship between parental level of education and choice of preschools, a two tailed Bivariate Pearson correlation was used. Table 4.4 shows the response

Table 4.4 Correlation between parental level of income and choice of preschools

Parental Level of education	Statistics	Preferred Preschools
Primary/Secondary/Tertiary/University	Pearson Correlation	.634**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	361

**Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2 tailed)

(Source: Researcher's Analysis, 2015)

The Pearson correlation result indicate a positive correlation between parental level of education and choice of preschools, with ($r=0.634$, $P<0.05$). Kelsey (2012) also found that parents with good financial income are able to provide quality education for their children including choosing quality schools for them regardless of the costs.

During the interview with the head teachers and preschool teachers, some of the themes that arose during the discussion were: (a) High education level (b) Low education level

High Education Level:

High education level is attainment of education above elementary or basic or primary education. The study found that parents with high education level would prefer well performing schools for their children regardless of the cost. One of the head teachers said:

"Parents with high literacy level knows the importance of quality education, hence they get involved fully in the education welfare of their children including selecting the best preschools with quality education for them". [Head Teacher, 7]

These sentiments by the head teacher were also shared by one of the preschool teachers when she said:

“Parents with good education background prefer to enroll their children in expensive or private schools because they link these schools with quality education and would want the best education for their children” [Preschool Teacher, 9]

These observations by the head teacher and preschool teacher show that parents with high level of education would consider quality of education and school performance before settling on a school for their children. These sentiments are supported by Michelle and Ayana (2006) who also found in their research that parents who are educated had better attitudes towards their children’s schooling than the illiterate ones and hence would prefer to enroll them in good schools.

Low Education Level :

Low education level is attainment of education below or just elementary or basic or primary education. The study found that parents with low education level would not care much about the quality of education offered to their children, hence would enroll their children in either averagely performing school or just low performing schools as long as their children are in school. One of the head teachers said:

“Illiterate parents or poorly educated parents are not so much concerned about the significance of education to their children hence would admit their children in any preschool regardless of the quality and in most cases, their level of involvement in education welfare of their children are low”. [Head Teacher, 3]

In the same breadth, one of the preschool teachers also said that:

“Parents with low education background are less involved in the education welfare and development of their children and so, would sometimes admit their children in poorly performing schools or cheaper preschools”. [Preschool Teacher, 7]

In the same issue another preschool teacher said, “most of the parents who are not educated they don’t bring their children to school at the age required that is at age six years”. [preschool teacher 11].

Another preschool teacher said, “some parents have hard time with their children when they are given home work because they are illiteracy and can’t understand what they are needed” [preschool teacher 10].

From these observations, it can be deduced that parents with low education status would prefer cheap and poor preschools and would participate less in education attainment of their children. Saadia (2010) similarly indicated that illiterate parents denied their children enrolment in preschool centers and would be concerned less with their children’s education development.

5. SUMMARY OF THE STUDY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction:

This chapter combines the entire study and contains summary of the research findings appropriate with the research objectives, conclusions and recommendations on the suggested study.

5.2 Summary of the findings:

The study found that most of the parents had attained secondary school certificate, had tertiary/university education, while only a few of them had only primary school certificate. This shows that majority of the parents, whose children were in preschools had a minimum of secondary school education, tertiary/university education. Hence parents were well educated and knew the significance of enrolling their children in preschools. It was also found that parents with minimum of secondary school education had their children admitted in private, expensive but well performing preschools, while those with low education attainment preferred to admit their children in cheap, low performing or averagely performing preschools where they can be able to pay. The study found a strong positive significant correlation between parental level of education and preschool preference.

5.3 Conclusion:

In the second research objective, the study sought to investigate the influence of parental level of education in preschool preference. The study found that most of the parents in Nyamira division had attained a minimum of secondary school education. It was also found that parents with a minimum of secondary school education had their children admitted in

private, expensive but well performing preschools, while those with low education attainment preferred to admit their children in cheap, low performing or averagely performing preschools due to illiteracy. In conclusion, parental level of education affects the preschool preference among the parents.

5.4 Recommendations:

This section stipulates the recommendations to be implemented for practice and policy so as to enable preschool learners perform well in academic activities and overall good literacy growth and development. The school stakeholders such as parents, head teacher and government should provide work in collaboration to provide learners with best learning environment regardless of the economic or education background of their parents.

5.5. Suggestions for further study:

This study contributed significantly to the body of literature on perception of ECDE teachers on best practices in public pre-schools. Further studies can be conducted on;

- 1) Effects of parental involvement in preschool education on academic performance of ECD learners.
- 2) Effects of parents teachers association on academic performance of ECD learners
- 3) Attitude and perception of parents on pre-school education
- 4) Effects of play and playing materials on children growth and development.

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