

The Influence of Parental Level of Income in Pre-School Preference in Nyamira Division, Nyamira County- Kenya

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Abstract: This study investigates the parental level of income in pre-school preference for their young children in Nyamira division, Nyamira county-Kenya. The objective of this study was to determine the sources that parents use to earn income to support their children in preschools. 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 from 3 zones in Nyamira Division. The sample size was 10% of the target population and random and purposive sampling techniques was used to sample the population, Mugenda and Mugenda (2006). The study adopted descriptive research design and was informed by the Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory of human development. 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. Purposive sampling was used to select the 10% of for primary school head teachers and pre-school head. 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 statistical package for social sciences (SSPS) version 22 was used to analyze data. Those from the interview schedules were analyzed using thematic analysis approach. The study found that parents with high income levels preferred private and expensive preschools due to quality of education offered in those preschools. On the other hand parents with low income prefer either cheap or public preschools for their children. The key recommendation was that the government should support parents with grants and small loans so that they can be able to support their preschool children in better and quality preschools.

Keywords: Parental income, preschools, preference, education, influence.

1. INTRODUCTION

Parents and the family environment have an important impact on the type of the school the child learns and also determine the health of the child, Behrman (1997)

Child care Department (2014) argues that it is likely the able parents prefer to take their children to preschools. Since the early years of life are important in forming the better foundation for health development and providing the children and their families the opportunity to reach their full potential, many children in developing countries are not able to develop fully because of serious characteristics of their parents. There is lack of cost effectiveness of preschools in developing counties compared to developed countries. In Northern Ireland children are entitled to free preschool for a year before they start their first year of primary school.

Family and childcare Department (2011) noted that fees for preschools vary hugely. They can range anywhere from \$40 per day to almost double the cost. The cost is often changed at an hourly rate and tends to include meals but each preschool differs. But its parents who are asked to contribute to buy some materials. State preschools are sometimes poorly founded, they rely on parents contributions to run the preschools.

Ruppert (2013) noted that most women in Japan quit their jobs after child birth because Japanese working hours made child care difficult. Tokyo government's own statistics says there are 20,000 children in the city waiting for place in a day care center. The government centers that exist are good but they are far and too few. And if they do get a place it means tests have to be done and can be expensive cost averaging around 70000 yen (737-487 per month) for the first child. Even if one gets the favor of having three children, it would be atleast 1000 yen a month even at the state university.

Mwesiye (2010) also found out that in Japan the government pays half of the day care's fees and the parents meet the other half. But in Uganda while working mothers would prefer to have their children in a day care, they can't afford to the high fees. They charge between sh. 400,000 and sh. 800,000 a term or sh. 15,000 a day.

Kiptum (2013) argues that many families living in high risk, low income neighborhoods tend to be preoccupied with survival strategies that either focus towards the family or do not permit them to pursue the types of parenting strategies that might increase income leading to greater school enrollment. Factors like low income earnings, large family/single family, illiteracy of parents which emanate among parents may contribute to low or poor preschool preference.

Riley(2002) and Shlay et al (2005) noted that disadvantaged families often have more limited options than their higher income counterparts and may face consideration challenges in their quest to find quality care and education. Low income families are often not able to afford or access the high centers they prefer.

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 those communities which are disadvantaged economically such as semi-arid and slum areas. Failure of parents to accomplish their responsibilities lays a weak academic foundation for their children who may drop out of school. The economic status of the parents has made them uninvolved, uninterested and not valuing and failing to encouraging their children's success.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

The general research problem addressed in this study is that although 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 with regard to parents' level of income.

GENERAL OBJECTIVE:

Influence of parental level of income on pre-school preference in Nyamira division, Nyamira County.

Specific objective of the study will be:

To investigate the sources of income that influence preschool preferences among the parents.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction:

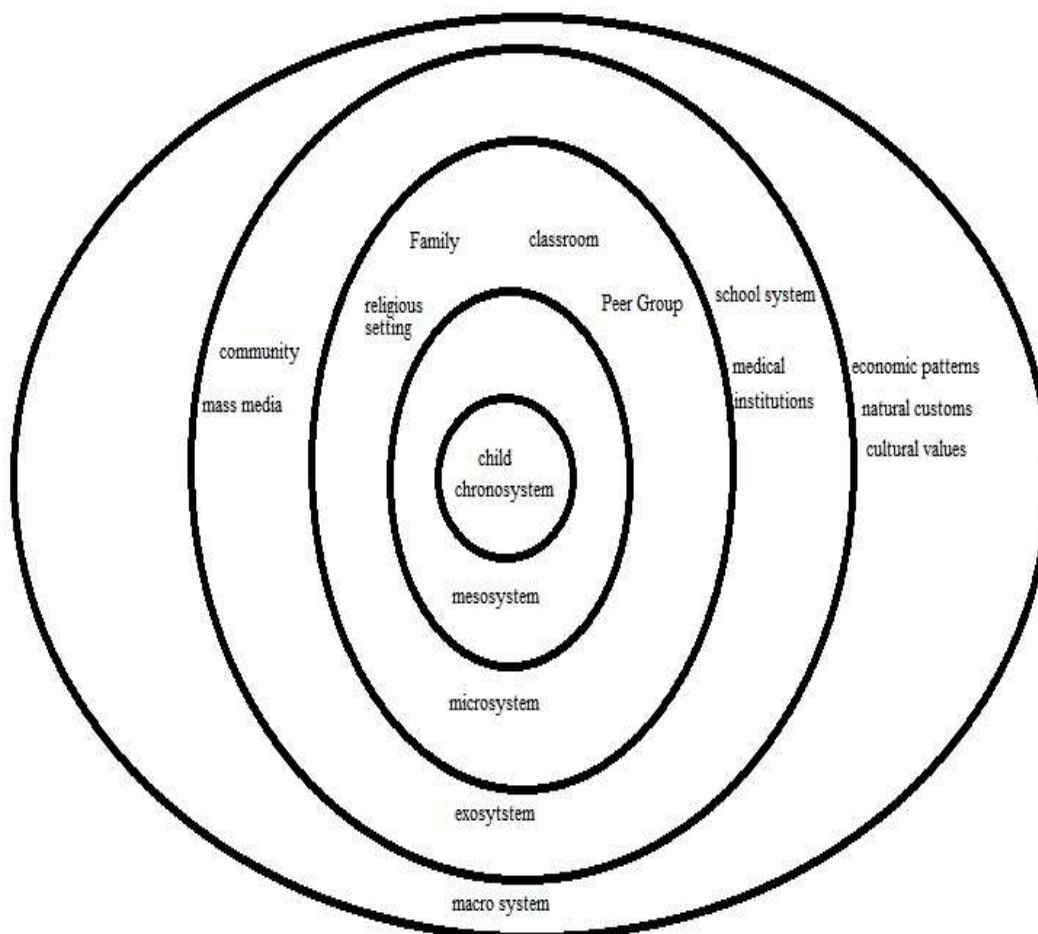
This section reviewed several literatures on past studies which assisted the researcher with the guidelines on how to study the objective and to assess the contributions towards the objectives. To intensify a complete analysis, the study looked into some issues that influence the pre-school preference for the young children. This was done with the purpose of establishing the reasons that make the parents to migrate their children from one preschool to the other even to far preschools ignoring the ones close to them.

2.2 Theoretical review:

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

2.3 Parent's level of income:

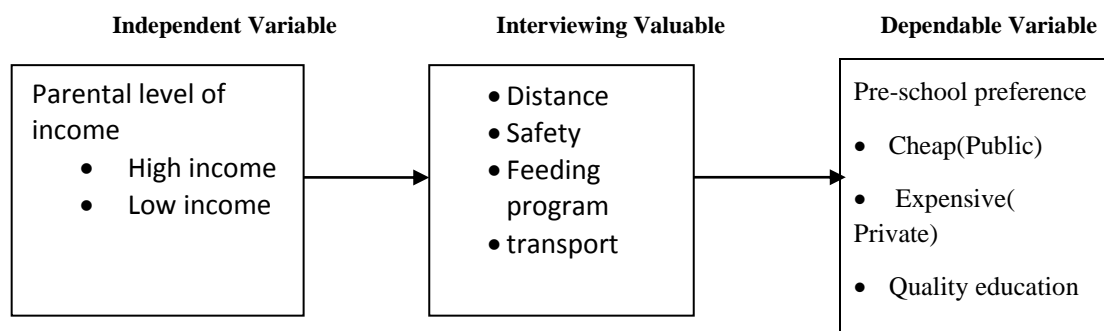
Kiptom (2013) describes that many families living in high risk, low income neighbor hoods tends to be preoccupied with survival strategies that either focus towards the family or do not permit them to pursue the type of parenting strategies that might increase income leading to greater school enrolment, effects like low income earnings, low level of education which emanates among parents may contribute to low or poor preschool preferences. Urie Bronfenbrenner's (1977-2005) theory noted that it is only by examining the child in relation to his or her context that can understand how a child grows through nutrition and other family needs. Children brought up in less favorable conditions obtain less education despite the large financial returns to schooling (Heckman and Masternor, 2004) Bronfenbrenner believes that a person's development was affected by everything in the surrounding like the level of income, level of education and family structure.



Uri bronfenbrenner's theory of ecological systems of development

2.4 Conceptual framework:

David Colander, 2013 explains a conceptual framework is as an analytical tool with several variations and contexts. It is used to make conceptual distinctions and organize ideas. A strong conceptual framework captures something real and does this in a way that is easy to remember and apply. This model of presentation presents the relationship between independent, dependent and intervening variables. This study shows the conceptual framework of parents and the preferential 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 parental income. It influences preferences for high performing schools with quality education for the pre-school children. This will lead to 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 on 10% of the population. 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:

Since the objective of the study was to investigate the influence of parental level of income on preschool preference in Nyamira Division, the study faced a challenge of only covering the parental level of income giving the priorities on high and low level of parents in terms of sources from salary, farming, business and wages. All these variables were captured only in the questionnaires for parents and interviews for primary school head teachers and preschool teachers.

4.2 Background information:

The study was carried in Nyamira Division Nyamira county Kenya. In the survey, 85.9% of the parent responded, where by 59.3% were male while 40.7% were female school head teachers, respondent 100% while preschool teachers the response was 100%. In the parent's level of income, it was noted that 62.3% earn from business, 30.7% from farming and 7.0% from salary and wages.

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% responsereturn 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 headteachers and female preschool teachers are high compared to male preschool teachers. This is contrary to that of KIHBS (2006) Kenya.

4.3. Findings on the influence of parental Level of Income in preschool preference:

In the first research objective, the first question responded to was: How does parental level of income influence preschool preference in Nyamira Division? This research question was responded to by 8 primary school head teachers, 23 preschool teachers and 361 parents. The study sought to investigate the influence of parental level of income on preschool preferences. Respondents (parents) were therefore asked to indicate the average amount they were earning per month. Table 4.2 shows their responses

Table 4.1 Parental Level of Income (N=361)

Parental Level of Income	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 10,000	65	18.0
10,000-30,000	116	32.1
Above 30,000	180	49.9
Total	361	100.0

Source: Researcher's data 2015

The findings show that almost half of the respondents (49.9%) were earning averagely Ksh. 30,000 and above, while 32.1% indicated that they were earning between Ksh. 10,000-30,000, while only 18.0% had a monthly income of less than 10,000. This shows that cumulatively, 82.0% (296) of the parents were earning above Ksh. 10,000 per month, and this was very significant in influencing their decision on the preferred preschool for their children. This is similar to that of Ludger (2007) in Germany. When probed on the source of income, 62.3% indicated business and farming, 30.7% mentioned farming alone, while 7% indicated salary from their employment. (See Table 4.3)

Table 4.2 Source of Income

Source of Income	Frequency	Percentage
Farming and business	65	62.3
Farming	116	30.7
Salary/wages	180	7.0
Total	361	100.0

Source: Researcher's data 2015

It can therefore be deduced that majority of the parents 62.3% whose children were in preschools were having stable financial income and this could enable them afford easily the preschool obligations such as fee payment, affordability of reading and writing materials and uniforms. 30.7% earned their income only from farming, which means they are unable to prefer highly paid preschool even though they perform. And only 7.0% earn their income from wages. This means they would not talk of taking their children to preschools.

The study also sought to investigate the preferred preschool for children of parents with above Ksh. 10,000 monthly income. This was necessary in order to find out the influence of parental level of income and choice of preschool. Respondents (parents) were therefore asked to indicate this, based on cost and type. Table 4.4 shows the response.

Table 4.3 Preferred preschool for children of parents with Kshs. 10,000 monthly incomes

Category of Preschools	Frequency	Percentages
Expensive	96	32.4
Cheap	48	16.2
Private	92	31.1
Public	60	20.3
Total	296	100.0

Source: Researcher's data 2015

Table 4.4 shows that most of the parents (32.4%) had their children learning in expensive preschools, 31.1% were in private schools, 16.2% indicated cheap schools, while 20.3% were in public schools. This shows that owing to their good financial status, most of these parents preferred either expensive schools or private schools that although were costly, were preferred in terms of quality education. These findings corroborate that of Chepkoech and Ronoh (2013) who also found that the family income had an influence on parental income in public preschools. The study further found that parental involvement does not only mean paying school fees or buying of school uniforms but it involves attending parent's meetings, encouraging of the students to work hard in school and assisting them doing homework and checking their books regularly.

The study also sought to investigate preferred preschool for children of parents with less than Ksh. 10,000. Table 4.5 shows the response.

Table 4.4 Preferred preschools for children of with less than Kshs. 10,000 monthly income

Category of Preschools	Frequency	Percentages
Expensive	03	04.6
Cheap	31	47.7
Private	05	07.7
Public	26	40.0
Total	65	100.0

Source: Researcher's data 2015

Table 4.6 shows that most of the parents with less than Ksh. 10,000 monthly income preferred either cheap or public schools as indicated by 47.7% and 40.0% respectively, while only 4.6% and 7.7% preferred expensive and private preschools respectively.

During the interview with the primary school head teachers and preschool teachers, some of the themes came up were (a) High Income Level (b) Low Income Level.

High income Level:

High income level is a state of earnings of an individual that is above the nation's poverty index. Such person is able to afford both the basic and secondary needs without any difficulty. It was found that parents with high income level could afford quality education for their children regardless of the cost. One of the head teachers said:

“High earning parent would prefer his or her child to go to prestigious preschools that offer quality education because they can afford the cost that comes with that quality. For instance, preschools with good learning facilities, good security, good teaching personnel and infrastructural facilities are preferred by these parents” [Head Teacher, 5]

From this statement, it can be interpreted that high income level parents would prefer prestigious learning institutions for their children because they can afford the cost. Therefore, parental income status influences his or her choice for the preschools for their children. This is also supported by the findings of Goldring and Rowley (2006) who reported that parents with good economic income would consider expensive private schools when choosing a school for their children because of the quality of education that comes with such institutions.

Low Income level:

Low income level is a state of earnings of an individual that is below the nation's poverty index. Such person is not able to afford both the basic and secondary needs easily. It was found that parents with low income level would prefer to enroll their children in cheaper preschools. For instance, in an interview with one of the head teachers, he said:

“Economically disadvantaged parents do not prefer expensive preschools for their children because they cannot afford the cost. Such parents would enroll their children in any school as long as it is not expensive or they can afford it”. [Head Teacher, 8]

It can therefore be concluded that low income level parents would prefer cheap preschools for their children, without looking at the details of the quality of education offered in these schools. These sentiments concurs with that of Judith and Bruce (2000) who also found that affluent parents would prefer expensive, prestigious schools for their children because of the quality of education than low income earning parents who would prefer less costly schools regardless of the quality of education.

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:

It was established that majority, that is more than half of the parents, were earning above Ksh. 10,000 per month, and this was very significant in influencing their decision on the preferred preschool for their children based on cost. On the source of income, more parents indicated that they earn their income from business and farming, half of them mentioned farming alone, while a very small percentage indicated salary from their employment. It was also found that parents earning above Ksh. 10,000 per month preferred, private and expensive preschools, due to quality education offered in these schools. On the other hand, parents with low income preferred either cheap or public preschools for their children. The Pearson correlation result indicated a positive correlation between parental level of income and choice of preschools.

5.3 Conclusion:

The study sought to investigate the influence of parental level of income in preschool preference. It was found that parents in Nyamira Division were mostly farmers especially in agribusiness where they plant crops in small scale, and businessmen. It was also found that parents with high income level preferred, private and expensive preschools, due to quality education offered in these schools. On the other hand, parents with low income preferred either cheap or public preschools for their children. It can therefore be concluded that parental level of income affect the choice of preschools among the parents with respect to cost and quality of education, which is why there seems to be a movement of children from nearer to far and far to nearer preschools.

5.4 Recommendations:

Low income earning parents should be empowered economically, to enable them raise their families with quality standards including providing them with quality education.

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