

International Journal of Humanity and Social Sciences

(IJHSS) **Determinants of Children's Enrollment in Selected Pre-Schools in Tana Delta Sub County, Tana River County, Kenya**



CARI
Journals

Determinants of Children's Enrollment in Selected Pre-Schools in Tana Delta Sub County, Tana River County, Kenya

 Ntondwe, R. Walakisa

<https://orcid.org/0009-0005-0790-9799>

Accepted: 15th Feb 2024 Received in Revised Form: 7th Mar 2024 Published: 21st Mar 2024

Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of the Study is to gather useful information on the determinants of children's enrollment in pre-schools, the study was guided by the following research question "How do parents' attitudes towards pre-school education influence pre-school enrollment?" Literature was reviewed under the following sub heading; parents' attitude towards early learning and pre-school enrollment.

Methodology: The researcher employed use of survey method to gather data, simple random was used in sampling respondents.

Findings: The study found out that Parents' Attitude towards Pre-School influences children's enrolment as majority (75%) of the parents in the study indicated that pre-school education was important to the child. This shows that majority of parents had a positive perception of pre-school education.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Policy and Practice: The researcher recommended that the government should include pre-schools into free primary education and financially support the school feeing program. The County Director of Education Mr M ashengu was a worried person in the declining enrolment of early learners, a view shared by the Director of Preschools, Tana-River County, Mr Abdi Bantta that that the two provided excellent support in solving the puzzle and delve into ways that will significantly reduce the costs incurred by parents' thereby encouraging increased enrollment.

Keywords: *Children's Enrolment, Determinants of Enrolment, School Enrolment*

1.1 Background to the Study

Education equips the human capital with the skills, attitudes and competences required in promoting self and national development (Curtis, 2000). What happens during the early stages of life of an individual has a significant influence in his entire life. Education is viewed as a social good because it creates opportunities and provides people with choices. Gilbert (2001) adds that education is an end in itself and a means to an end because it helps achieve economic personal development and investment in education is considered an essential pre-condition to economic growth.

Early Childhood Development (ECE) entails the all-round growth and development of a child from the time of conception up to eight years (Gakii, 2003). Growth and development is influenced to greater levels by the environmental factors which parents expose their children to (Mungai, 2004). Article 28 of the Children's Right Commission (CRC, 1989) and the UN Convention both emphasized the importance of pre-school education as drivers of economic development. Keeping in line with these and other declarations, the Government of Kenya signed various agreements such as the 1990 Jomtiem World Conference on Education for All (EFA), the 1990 African Charter on the rights and Welfare of the Child, the 2000 World education forum (Dakar Senegal) and 2000 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the 2001 Children's Act RoK (2006). These forums underscored the importance of Early Childhood Education (ECE). Subsequently, education has been and continues to be of paramount importance and concern since it prepares people to socialize and become organized in life. According to Murungi (2013) there is continuous documented trend of low enrolments of children in the Early Childhood Education Centers in Kenya and these low enrolment trend continue to increase with the years. Murungi adds that inability by parents to provide required needs is a major reason for low enrolment in the Early Childhood Education Centres. Ncabira (2005) also found that lack of school fees and high cost of education led to low access in education. Gakunga (2013) established that there is low enrollment rate of children in Early childhood Education Institutions in Thogoto and Karai Zones of Kikuyu District due to some highlighted factors such as poor infrastructure, parents' ignorance on the importance of early childhood education, low parents' level of education, parents' poor economic status as a result of poor climatic conditions among other constraints.

When a child is exposed to high-quality early childhood care their cognitive, language, and social development are impacted in a positive way particularly among children from poor backgrounds (NRCIM, 2000). In the United States, the enrollment in pre-school was 55 percent in 1995 compared to 57 percent in 2005. In 2007 enrollment was 55 percent (Child Trends, 2012). In Canada, school enrollment for pre-primary stood at 72.46% for females and 72.58% for males as of 2009. Pre-school enrollment in Asia has been on the ascendancy earning the continent the fastest growing in terms of pre-school uptake. Fifty-four percent and forty-eight percent of children were enrolled in pre-schools in India and China respectively (Desai, Amaresh, Joshi, AbusalehShariff, & Vanneman, 2010). According to UNICEF (2014) only 6

percent of children aged between 36 and 59 months are enrolled in pre-school in Zambia. In addition, only 17.1 percent of children enrolled in grade one in 2007 had pre-school experience. In Uganda, the proportion of children attending pre-school was 3% in 2007 which was an improvement from 2% the previous year following the launch of the country's ECD policy. According to Lila (2012) there is a gap of 91% in pre-school enrollment. The gross enrolment ratio for pre-primary school participation between 2008 and 2012 stood at 52% for females and 51% for males. Clifford (2007) indicates that poor education in third world countries has implications not just for illiteracy figures but also for poverty indices. Children who do not attend school have little chance of coming out of poverty in which they were raised in. Clifford adds that education is the only way to reduce poverty since it enables job creation and social awareness.

1.2.3 Research Question

To achieve the objectives, the following questions were formulated:

- a. How do parents' attitudes towards pre-school education influence pre-school enrollment in Tana Delta Sub County.

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.2 Parents' Attitude towards ECDE and Pre-school Enrollment

In the context of this study parental attitudes are taken largely to refer to the importance attached to pre-school education by parents. This study seeks to investigate how parental attitudes affect enrollment in ECDE centers. Positive attitudes and background plays a crucial role on the kind of rearing practices to which development of the child can be enhanced. Before joining pre-school, it is important for the parent to provide possible opportunities for the socialization of the children through different activities like play, songs, dances and opportunities for the children to talk to other people (Bwajuma, 2000).

Attitudes of parents who are educated and those who are not are conspicuously different. Chau and Ayana (2006) noted that parents who were educated had better attitudes towards their children's schooling than the illiterate ones. According to a research study by UNESCO (2000), illiteracy level is high in Kenya and Africa at large; 142 million African adults are illiterate. Sammons (2007) indicates that virtually all successful programmes are influenced by education and participation and other researchers have confirmed the same. Saadia (2010) indicates that illiterate parents denied their children enrolment in ECD centres in order to stay at home with their siblings as they went to fetch water and perform other household chores.

Qadiri and Manhas (2009) conducted a study to assess parental perception towards pre-school education imparted at early childhood education centres in India. The researchers found that most parents (81%) thought of pre-school education as a combination of concepts which included an age bound format related to preparation for primary schooling and provision of learning in an interactive manner. Most parents (25%) felt that children who attend early

childhood development centers (ECD) cultivate good health and hygiene habits, develop pre literacy skills (19%) and communication skills (16%). Significant differences were found among the awareness of parents regarding the Integrated Child Development Service (ICDS) scheme. Most parents were aware about the nutrition facility but did not consider these centers as adequately equipped to provide pre-school education. Parents sending their children to regular pre-school centers were found to be less aware about ICDS scheme and its role in pre-school education.

Stark, Gordon-Burns, Purdue, Rarere-Briggs and Turnock, (2012) conducted a study of parental attitudes towards pre-school among parents of children in New Zealand. The study found that more parents tended to have a low opinion of pre-school education. The point of departure however is that this study focused on attitudes of parents based on disability of children attending pre-schools. Johnson (2011) sought to investigate the teachers and parents attitude towards E.C.E centers in Kiambu County. From the research findings, it was evident that some parents had various views of the pre-school. Hiding in some cultural backgrounds 50% of the teacher respondents said that some parents abuse the pre-school going age children by giving them some housework, babysitting or grazing duties compromising early enrolment into preschools. Parents level of education was supported by majority of the respondents (teachers 66.7%) as being one of the factors influencing the time and rate of enrolling the young ones in pre-schools. Literate parents on the other hand are aware of the advantages of timely enrolling their children in pre-schools.

Ng'eno (2012) explained that in Kenya, pre-school education has been going down in terms of enrollment numbers. Majority of parents preferred to keep their children at home until they attained the age of six years to join standard one and thereby qualifying them for free primary education. The parents did this to avoid pre-school payment, arguing that the government should provide for free pre-school education as well. At this age the child is taken straight to standard one, which is free, without going through an ECDE programme. Whereas Ngeno's study found that lack of money to pay school fees was the major deterring factor, Johnson (2011) indicated that house chores made parents not take their children to school. There is little literature on how the household's economic background influences pre-school enrollment in selected public preschools in Tana -Delta, Tana-River County. The researcher seeks to fill this gap by find out the factors hindering pre-school enrollment in Tana- Delta, Tana River County.

Findings

4.5.1 Parents' Attitude towards Pre-School to gauge parental attitudes towards pre-school, the parents in the study were asked to indicate how important they felt pre-school was

Table 4.4 Parents' Attitude towards Pre-School

Rating	Frequency	Percentage
Very important	9	45
Important	6	30
Unimportant	5	25
TOTAL	20	100

Majority (75%) of the parents in the study indicated that pre-school education was important to the child. This shows that majority of parents had a positive perception of pre-school education. The findings are however in contrast to those of Stark et al. (2012) who found that more parents tended to have a low opinion of pre-school education.

5.3 Conclusion

The study concludes that children's economic background is the major factor hindering preschool enrollment. Parents are required to pay school fees, buy uniform and learning materials for their children and pay other school levies. Parents also incur other related costs such as paying for transport for their children for the parents who don't live close to the school. These costs are a burden to many parents who unfortunately are of poor socio-economic status. The study also concludes that school feeding program is the major encouraging factor for pre-school enrollment. The pre-school children were offered porridge at break time and rice with beans at lunchtime. The school feeding program encouraged enrollment because the parents were comfortable knowing that their child's meals were taken care of for the day. For some poor families, the school feeding programme was their only source of food for the child. In addition, children enjoyed having meals together and therefore looked forward to the school day and this encouraged not only enrollment but also retention. Other factors encouraging enrollment were the qualification of teachers, playing facilities and day care services.

5.4 Recommendation

The State Department of Early and Basic Education should work in cohorts with the Department of Education and Sports to assist learners aged 4-8 years spread between PPI and Grade 3 to adjust to school environment by providing outdoor equipment useful for emotional development of learners.

Policy need to address the 'Every Young Soul develop through learning' by allowing Children's Officers, Special Needs Educators, Education Quality Assurance Officers, and Early Education Programs Officers work as a single team in carrying school Assessment on the learning Environment, Pedagogy, to provide a healthy learning environment.

Thirdly, political mileage by Governors in having say in the employment of Preschool teachers should be stopped by delegating the mandate to the Teachers Service Commission. This will rid of the county of Quack teachers employed politically without caring for the developmental needs of the child but political interests that begin from the Wards to the top county political and civil cream. In short, the National Government should take an overseer stance and correct the rote in the county education sector.

REFERENCES

- Kenya Open Data Survey. (2014). County Data Sheet: Nyeri. Retrieved June 12th 2014, from Kenya Open Data Survey: <https://opendata.go.ke/facet/counties/nyeri>
- Kothari C (2004). Research Methodology: Methods and Techniques, 2nd Edition. New Age International Publishers, New Delhi, India.
- Kuria, S. W. (2014). Rate of Access and Retention of Children in Public Pre-schools: A Case of Isinya Sub-County, Kenya. (Unpublished Master's Thesis). Kenyatta University, Nairobi.
- Lamy, C. E. (2013). How Pre-School Fights Poverty. Faces of Poverty, 32-36.
- Lila, G. (2012). The State of Early Childhood Education in Uganda. Retrieved 2014, from New Vision: <http://www.newvision.co.ug/mobile/detail.aspx?newsid=630983&catid=413>
- Maina, J. G. (2015). Factors Influencing Effective Implementation of Curriculum in Pre-Primary Schools Managed By Presbyterian Church of East Africa Kikuyu Sub-County, Kenya. (Unpublished Master's Thesis). Kenyatta University, Nairobi.
- Mbugua, K. W. (2013). Factors Influencing Children's Access to Early Childhood Development Education Centers in Nyandarua South District, Kenya. University of Nairobi: Nairobi



©2024 by the Authors. This Article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>)