



## RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARENTS' SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS AND SATISFACTION WITH QUALITY OF SERVICES OFFERED IN PRE-PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN MAKADARA SUB-COUNTY, KENYA

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### Abstract:

Parents are important stakeholders in preprimary education sector and the essence of finding out how they perceive the quality of services in schools was imperative. Thus, the need to investigate how parents' socioeconomic status influenced their satisfaction with quality of services offered in preprimary schools was crucial. The study was premised on the Expectancy-Disconfirmation Theory of Customer Satisfaction and Interactive School Polls' Conceptual Model of Parents' School Satisfaction. The study employed correlation research design. Parents with children aged 3 to 6 years attending pre-primary schools constituted the study population. Data was collected by use of questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

**Keywords:** parents' satisfaction; quality of services; pre-primary schools

### 1. Introduction

The need for quality pre-primary education cannot be overemphasized. Evidence from the World Bank (2006) shows that pupils' performance in primary schools is influenced by access to quality pre-primary education which includes quality services that promotes the growth and development of young children. (Hassan, 2011; Mishra 2009 and Wawire 2006).

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Globally the demand for pre-primary education is increasing. Statistics show that 157 million children enrolled in pre-primary schools in the year 2009 reflecting a 40% increase compared to 1999 (UNESCO, 2012). The Kenyan situation shows a rise in enrollment by 11.8% from 1.7 to 1.9 million in the period of 2008 to 2009 (Government of Kenya, 2008). More participation of women in employment was one of the contributing factors (Omar, Nazri, Abu, & Omar, 2009).

Katz (1994) states that quality preprimary education entails capturing the parents' experiences in children's learning processes. Omar (2009) also states that the essence of parental involvement in pre-primary schools is because they are the main sponsors. This is further augmented by (Britner & Phillips, 1995; Griffith, 2010; Hoon, 1994; Omar, 2009; Silva, 2006) who concurred that evaluation of parents satisfaction with the services in the early childhood development (ECD) centers can be clarified by the advent of parents rating pertinent quality aspects entailing related to the quality of services offered.

Studies by Abagi (2009) showed that out of the 181 ECD centers in 18 of the districts in Kenya offered diminished quality in terms of the services provided to children. Deplorable conditions in the day care centers whereby learning was conducted as the children sat on stones under trees was evident in some of the day care centers. This was elucidated in a report by the Ministry of Education Report (2011) affirming that most of the pre-primary schools had a dearth of trained and qualified teachers and inadequate physical facilities.

Evidence of impaired nutrition, teacher attrition coupled with inadequate teaching and learning materials was equally confirmed. Ayodo (2009) had found that the majority of parents in Nairobi sought house helps due the belief that most of the daycare centers offered low quality services. Thus, the study sought to find out the relationship between parents' socioeconomic status and satisfaction with quality of services offered in pre-primary schools in Makadara Sub-County, Kenya.

## **2. Problem Statement**

Parents enroll their children in pre-primary schools with a wide range of quality of services provided in the centres. Quality standards for preprimary education have for a long time been defined and developed by experts and policy makers. Thus, parents who are key stakeholders in early childhood education were often left out in the process and deliberations of their children education. Questions were raised on parents' perception of the quality of education in pre-primary schools and whether they were

contented with the different aspects of quality indicators in the centres (Katz, 1994; Ceglowski, 2012).

According to emerging literature, the satisfaction of parents in regard to services offered in preprimary schools should be measured by considering parents' views regarding how the preprimary schools perform in various quality features. Few studies done in Kenya have attempted to research on parents' satisfaction with quality of services provided in schools. The current study therefore sought to address the relationship between parents' socioeconomic status and their satisfaction with the quality of services provided in pre-primary schools.

### **3. Objectives of the Study**

1. To establish the relationship between parents' income and their satisfaction with quality of services offered in pre-primary schools.
2. To determine the relationship between parents' education and their satisfaction with quality of services offered in pre-primary schools.

### **4. Research Methodology**

Correlation research design was used in this study. The target population was parents with children aged 3 to 6 years with children in pre-primary schools in Makadara Sub-county. There were a total of 94 pre-primary schools with 60 of them public, while the remaining 34 private schools. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select 118 parents which represented 10% of the entire population. A questionnaire was used to collect data and analyzed using descriptive statistics.

### **5. Results and Discussions**

It has been discussed under the following sections.

#### **5.1 Parents' Satisfaction with the Quality of Services Offered**

In the first objective, the study was to establish the relationship between parents' income and satisfaction with quality of services offered in pre-primary schools. A questionnaire was employed to obtain information on the quality of services offered in the centres. A 4-point likert scale ranging from "1: not satisfied" to 4 "very satisfied was used" to collect data. To summarize parents' satisfaction with quality of services

provided in schools, means and standard deviations were generated and the results have been presented in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Level of Satisfaction with Quality of Services Provided at Preprimary Schools

Quality Indicators	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Not Satisfied	Mean	SD
Classroom environment	10	89	13	1	2.95	.488
Quality of teaching	16	75	18	4	2.91	.622
Furniture	9	77	25	2	2.82	.586
Child Safety	8	76	27	2	2.79	.584
Teaching-learning materials	18	56	36	3	2.78	.737
Children play materials	8	75	25	5	2.76	.644
Relationship with children	7	72	32	2	2.74	.594
Commitment to work	9	72	26	6	2.74	.678
Sanitary facilities	4	76	28	5	2.69	.610
Quality of meals	3	75	33	2	2.69	.549
Quantity of meals	11	62	32	8	2.67	.749
Interest in children needs	7	65	34	7	2.63	.695
<b>Overall</b>	<b>9.2</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>0.62</b>

As it can be seen in Table 1 the means and standard deviations for the listed items ranges from 2.63 (SD 0.695) to 2.95 (SD=0.488). Overall mean for parents satisfaction with the quality of services offered in pre-primary school was 2.8 (SD=0.62). This indicates that parents were somewhat satisfied with the quality of services offered in pre-primary schools. The results also shows that parents' satisfaction with the various quality indicators of services offered in pre-primary schools varied across the different aspects of quality education. The highest quality indicators for services offered were classroom and learning space (M=2.95, SD=.48) regular teaching of children (M=2.91, SD=.62) and learning desks chairs and tables (M=2.82, SD=.58). The lowest quality indicators for services offered in pre-primary schools were interest in children needs (M=2.63, SD=.69); quality of meals (M=2.67, SD=.74) and quantity of meals M=2.69, SD=.54).

The study findings concur with the results of a study conducted by Ofsted Inspectors (2012) which indicated that most parents were generally satisfied with the quality of education provided to their children. The findings are however inconsistent with those of Abagi (2009) who reported most pre-primary schools in Kenya were

characterized with poor physical facilities, inadequate teaching-learning materials, and poor health, nutrition and safety provisions.

#### 4.2 Parental Income and Satisfaction with the Quality of Services

In the second objective, the researchers were to determine the relationship between parents' income level and satisfaction with quality of services provided in pre-primary schools. To accomplish this objective parents' were asked to indicate their level of income. Parents' income levels which were compared with their levels of satisfaction with the quality of services offered in the centres and the results have been presented in table 2 below.

**Table 2:** Parents Income and Satisfaction with quality of services

Parents Income	Frequencies	Percentages	Means score in satisfaction with quality of services
Less than 5000	2	1.8%	1.40
5001-10,000	12	10.6%	2.20
10,001-15,000	14	12.4%	2.50
15,001-20,000	20	17.7%	2.57
20,001 and above	65	57.5%	2.80
<b>Total</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2.29</b>

Table 2 indicates that majority of the parents' income was 20,000 and above. The overall mean score in parents' satisfaction was 2.29 implying that they were somewhat satisfied with the quality of services offered in the centres. It is also important to note that parents' who earned higher income were more satisfied with quality of services provided as they were able to enroll their children in pre-primary schools they viewed provided high quality services to their children.

To find out the relationship between parents' income and satisfaction with the quality of services offered in the centres, the following hypothesis was generated and tested:

*H01: There is no significant relationship between parents' income and satisfaction with quality of services offered in pre-primary schools.*

**Table 3:** Relationship between Parents' Income and their Satisfaction with the Quality of Services Provided in Pre-Primary Schools

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	9.750 <sup>a</sup>	9	0.001
Likelihood Ratio	12.504	9	0.012
N of Valid Cases	12		

Table 3 shows that the chi-square value for parents' income and their satisfaction with quality of services offered in pre-primary schools was 9.750 at 9 degree level of freedom and with 0.001 p-value. The results imply that the relationship between parents' income and their satisfaction with the quality of services offered in pre-primary schools was significant. Thus, the hypothesis which stated there is no significant relationship between parents' income and their satisfaction with quality of services provided in pre-primary schools was rejected.

The above findings concur with those of Danner (2012) who revealed that high quality of education have been associated with high income. As a result, parents with university degree have the ability to enroll their children in schools they perceive as providing high quality services. Mwoma (2009) also states that there is an association between high parental income and parents' active involvement in their children's education, which determines parents' satisfaction. Whereby, less educated and poor parents may feel less able to be actively involved in their children's school. The findings are however inconsistent with Al Jabery, et al. (2014), whose study in Jordan established no significant differences in parent's satisfaction and income level with education services provided across the various levels of education. Nyakundi, Begi and Kang'ethe (2017) study in Kenya also reported parents' level of income was found to influence their perception on children's school readiness.

#### 4.4 Level of Education and Parents Satisfaction with the Quality of Services Offered in Preprimary Schools

The researchers were also to explore the relationship between parents' level of education and their satisfaction with quality of services provided in pre-primary schools. The objective to be achieved was: To determine the relationship between parents' education level and their satisfaction with quality of services offered in pre-primary schools. To attain this objective parents' satisfaction with the quality of services offered in the centres were calculated and matched with their level of education. The results have been presented in Table 4.

**Table 4:** Parents Level of Education and Satisfaction with quality of services offered

Parents Education Level	Frequency	Percentage	Mean
Primary	8	7.1%	2.60
Secondary	16	14.2%	2.62
Diploma	26	23%	2.70
Bachelor's Degree	30	26.5%	2.74
Masters	23	20.4%	2.76
PhD	10	8.8%	2.84
<b>Total</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2.73</b>

As shown in Table the overall mean score in parents' satisfaction with the quality of services offered in pre-primary schools was 2.73. The results also shows that parents with higher level of education were more satisfied with the quality of services compared with those with low level of education. This was because parents with high level of education enrolled their children in pre-primary schools which offer high quality education.

To find out the relationship between parents level of education and satisfaction with quality of services provided in pre-primary schools the following hypotheses was stated and tested.

*H02: There is no significant relationship between parents' education and their satisfaction with quality of services offered in pre-primary schools.*

**Table 5:** Relationship between Parents' Level of Education and Satisfaction with Quality of Services offered

<b>Chi-Square Tests</b>			
	<b>Value</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</b>
Pearson Chi-Square	26.000 <sup>a</sup>	27	0.024
Likelihood Ratio	23.227	27	0.03
N of Valid Cases	12		

Table 5 shows that the chi-square value for the education level of parents' and their satisfaction with service quality provided in pre-primary schools was 26.000 at 27 degree level of freedom and with 0.024 p-value. The result shows that the relationship between level of education of parents and satisfaction with the quality of services offered in pre-primary schools was significant. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. This means that parents who had education levels, which were higher, were more satisfied with quality of services provided in pre-primary schools than their counterparts with low level of education.

The above study findings confirmed the results of other studies that show that parents with low level of education tend to highly rate the quality of education offered in pre-primary schools as compared to those with low levels of education. For example, Koech (2010) in Uasin Gishu district found out that parents who had less education had significantly differed in their involvement in pre-primary school activities. Dasgupta, Narayan and Skoufias (2009) also reported that most Indonesian parents with high education levels were less satisfied with the quality of education and health services offered. Similar findings were reported by a study by Badri, Mason and Mourad (2011) in Abu Dhabi, which showed that parents' education was a significant determinant of

parents' satisfaction with subjects taught. Parents who have high education levels were more involved in children education and hence more satisfied with the quality of services offered (Kohl, Lengua, McMahan, 2000; Mwoma, 2009). Nyakundi et al. (2017) in Kasarani division found out, parents' level of education was associated with their perception on their children school readiness.

## **5. Conclusions**

Parents were somewhat satisfied with the service quality offered in pre-primary schools. The relationship between parents' income and satisfaction with quality of services offered in schools was significant. This is because parents' who earned higher income were more satisfied with quality of services as they were able to enroll their children in pre-primary schools which were of high quality. The relationship between parents' level of education and satisfaction with quality of services offered in schools was also significant. This was because parents who had higher level of education were more satisfied with services provided in pre-primary schools than parents who had low level of education. This could be because parents with high education levels enrolled their children in pre-primary schools providing quality education.

## **6. Recommendations**

Some of the recommendations for the key stakeholders based on the study findings are described as follows:

### **1. School Management**

School management should ensure that they involve parents in their children activities by encouraging them to attend school functions, volunteer in school activities like sports, communicate with them regularly and incorporate them into the learning process.

### **2. Parents**

Parents should be more involved school activities and attend school meetings in order to suggest ways to improve the quality of services offered to their children. These will increase their level satisfaction with the quality of services provided at the centres.

### **3. Ministry of Education, Science and Technology**

The ministry should promote and improve the quality of education in pre-primary schools by ensuring that managers of the pre-primary schools comply with ECD service standard guidelines.

### **4. County Government**



The county should allocate adequate funds to pre-primary schools to improve on the quality of services provided in ECD centres. County government should also ensure they closely monitor ECD centers to ensure they comply with the service standard guidelines. This will improve the quality services offered to children and hence more parents' satisfaction with quality of services offered.

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