

Influence of Parental Level of Education on Management of Public Early Childhood Development Education Centres in Makueni County, Kenya

By

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Abstract

Preschool education is crucial and helps increase academic achievements of school age pupils. Accordingly, the immediate educational outcomes of the pupils is influenced by several factors among them parental level of education. Pupils learn from such influencing factors by direct experiences and by observing those around them. The purpose of this study was therefore to investigate the influence of parental level of education on management of public ECDE centres in Makueni County, Kenya. The study adopted cross-sectional research design. Stratified, simple random, and purposeful sampling methods were utilized to collect data. Data was collected through questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and document analysis guides. The validity and trustworthiness of the research tools were assessed by using the face validity and Cronbach Alpha tests. Quantitative data was analyzed by use of descriptive statistics notably the mean, standard deviation, percentages and frequencies. Qualitative data was categorized into themes and laid out in narrative form. Linear regression analysis was adopted to test the hypothesis at 95% confidence interval. Key findings indicated that there was statistically significant influence of parental level of education on management of public ECDE centres in Makueni county, Kenya at $p=0.002$ ($p\text{-value} < 0.05$). It was recommended that parents/guardians should be informed through defined forums on the importance of participation and support early childhood education and cooperation with ECDE teachers for development of their children and to conduct further study on school-family cooperation on management of public ECDE centres in Makueni county, Kenya.

Key words: Kenya, Makueni, Early childhood Education, Management, Parental level of education

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Introduction

Early Childhood Development and Education (ECDE) is the foundation of all learning globally. Nonetheless, rapid changes in the society have been noted due to issues of gender equality, young working mothers, industrialization, families of two working parents, high rates of single-parent homes, and the collapse of the traditional parenting. Raising family support system, therefore, affected the management of ECDE (Bruijns et.al 2022, p.10).

Parental/guardian time investment in a growing child is one of the pivotal predictors in the success of child as an adult. For instance, Osei-Akoto and Ansong (2012) note that a child's upbringing shapes his or her moral, spiritual, and intellectual development. Without this groundwork being done at home, a child's educational experience will be severely limited. The issue affects not only the family but the neighborhood as a whole. Parents with higher levels of education tend to produce more trustworthy offspring.

Parental level of education is defined as the greatest level of schooling attained by each parent (Marquez, 2019). Kalil et al., (2012) thus delineates that mothers with college level of education spend more time offering age-appropriately and child care activities with their children than high school educated mothers. The interactions between a parent and a child lead to the development of expectations for success or beliefs that guide and maintain behavior of a child over time. As a parent models achievement-oriented behavior like reading and offer a variety of opportunities to their children to engage in achievement-oriented experiences like after school programs; children develop a mindset that achievement-oriented behavior is expected and valued.

Consequently, parents' emphasis on education influences their children's motivation to do well in school. In other words, parents have a beneficial influence on their children's education since kids look up to them and want to succeed academically by imitating them. This is confirmed by Mandillah (2019) who assert that children fare worse when their parents have a low degree of education, creating a vicious cycle in which no family member ever achieves more educational success than their parents. In another research, the Government of Kenya (2018) found that compared to children whose parents did not complete high school, those whose parents did complete high school had higher educational aspirations and completed higher levels of schooling.

The parent's attitudes and actions are the medium via which the parent's degree of education influences the administration of ECDE centers. The level of parental education is frequently a more reliable indicator of parental attitudes and actions. It has been found that parents with higher levels of education are better able to research, locate, synthesize, and evaluate data related to their children's health and development (Davis-Kean, Tang and Waters, 2019). This makes parental education a distinct indication of socioeconomic position. In fact,

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parents who possess such abilities are more likely to model healthy social behavior and hold optimistic ideas about their children's potential for success in both the home and the classroom. From the findings of different studies it is, therefore concluded that there is a strong association between parental level of education and their involvement in childhood development education including school management.

A study in the USA revealed that high interactions between highly educated mothers and their children promoted optimal development (Kalil et al., 2012). Nonetheless, in Makueni county, parents in public schools have different levels of education which has influenced their differences in participation in school matters of their children. According to Đurišić and Bunijevac (2017) the involvement of parents in the education of children starts at home with parents/guardians providing appropriate learning experiences as well as positive attitude about school. The different levels of parent education in Makueni county, has in turn affected preschool education, which is the foundational education of children, the effect spreading to the general management of ECDE centres.

Accordingly, the influence of parental level of education on management of public ECDE centres in Makueni county is thus worth investigation. Biersteker (2016) observes that a number of factors are responsible for influencing children's educational requirements. These comprise of family socio-economic status such as parental level of education, income level, the community as well as policyholders ranging from the central to the regional governments. Parental level of education as a measure of a family socio-economic status portrays the highest-level education attained by a parent or guardian and thus critical for management of Early Childhood and Development Education centres. In Makueni County's context, the researcher did not find any recent research dealing with the current subject despite the important transitions in the Kenyan education system. The studies conducted on ECDE deal with a number of other different aspects. For instance, Musau (2013) studied the effects of the training of ECDE teachers on pupil's academic performance in Makindu division, Makueni county.

The relationship between parental level of education and management and government policy as intervening variable is one of the most important aspects that could indirectly measure the quality of ECDE outputs. Consequently, this will be important in measuring the return on investment in preschool education and specifically in public ECDE centres. In light of inconsistent study findings on the influence of parental level of education on management of ECDE centres, it is necessary to do a further investigation in the context of Makueni county particularly in the public ECDE centres.

Therefore, effective management of ECDE centres depends to great extent on parental involvement in the ECDE activities, which again depends on parental level of education. In this regard, the outcome of this study will have implications to administrators in education regarding sensitization of parents/guardians on importance of preschool education to cover the lowly educated segment of parents. For this reason, the researchers sought to carry out the current study to investigate the influence of parental level of education on management of public ECDE centres in Makueni county, Kenya.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Management of ECDEs' is a critical component of the educational systems, to foster early childhood educational development. Parental involvement in education has been found important in enhancing the learning of their children. For instance, by organizing activities at home like singing, drawing and reading, they facilitate their children's learning experience. Similarly by asking questions about what happens in school especially the core-curricular activities such as, the games and poems they like improves their children's communication skills. These also encourage the children to develop a positive attitude towards learning and education. Parental involvements create a good morale for teachers since they feel acknowledged and appreciated. A trustful relationship between parents and teachers leads to better communication by sharing how the children are faring in pre-school. Regardless of the benefits of parental involvement in their children's education, the situation in Makueni County is different.

There is a public concern that parental involvement is quite low, For instance when called to attend school meeting the attendance is low, some schools children do not complete preschool. Although the management of ECDE centers is a key issue, they are faced by a range of issues across communities among social economic factors. In the developing world, ECDEs have been left out in terms of policies aimed at improving their operations and better their outcomes. Most of these institutions are faced with challenges of low parental involvements, limited resources, insecurity, poor social status, and limited room for economic growth into the future. The disparities reveal the need for supporting the school administrators, through sensitization of parents/guardians on the importance of education to better the educational outcomes into the future. A number of studies have been done on the impact of parental involvement education on ECDE centre management, but very little is known about the influence of parental level of education on public ECDE centre management in Makueni county, Kenya. Consequently, this study focused on the influence parental levels of education the administration of ECDE centres that addressed the gap.

1.3 Research Question

In what way does parental level of education influence the management of public ECDE centres in Makueni county, Kenya?

1.4 Hypothesis of the Study

H₀₁: There is no statistically significant influence of parental level of education on management of public ECDE centres in Makueni county, Kenya.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

.This study was anchored in Stakeholder theory which was put forward by R. Edward Freeman (1984), a professor at the University of Virginia, in his landmark book, "Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach." It states that the stakeholder is an ecosystem, which involves anyone devoted and involved in, or affected by, the company: these comprise of employees, environmentalists near the company's plants, vendors, governmental agencies, and more. Freeman's theory suggests that a company's real success lies in satisfying all its stakeholders, not just those who might profit from its stock. He suggests that a company's stakeholders are

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"those groups without whose support the organization would cease to exist." These groups would include customers, employees, suppliers, political action groups, environmental groups, local communities, the media, financial institutions, governmental groups, and more. Edward Freeman, holds that organizational sustainability depends on different relationships with different (groups of) stakeholders. Stakeholder theory claims that whatever the ultimate aim of the corporation or other form of business activity, managers and entrepreneurs must take into account the legitimate interests of those groups and individuals who can affect (or be affected by) their activities (Donaldson and Preston 1995, Freeman 1994).

The use of Stakeholder theory is advantageous in the sense that the manager must work for the benefit of everyone whose interests or groups of interest are affected by it. It works to benefit all stakeholders and is fair to everyone involved by promoting social wellbeing. It makes managers accountable to an extent that organizational leadership must create plans to meet the needs of all people who have invested money and efforts to support the organization. The theory is applicable to the study in that the ECDE Centres has many stakeholders. These include the ECDE teachers, the parents, the pupils, County Directors of Education, the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development. The school management must work to ensure each stakeholder needs are met if the success of the organization is to be sustainable.

2.2 Review of Related Literature

Available studies show that research has been done on the influence of parental level of education on management of ECDE. For instance, Bashir, Jafari, Malik, and Hayat (2021) reviewed literature on the impact of rural poverty on children's access to school in Pakistan. The data utilized in this study were collected in 2018 as part of an effort to improve the educational opportunities and results for Pakistani students through the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER). Only information from 158 rural locations was included in the study. The towns were chosen using a PPS sampler, which stands for "Probability Proportional to Size." Twenty homes were selected at random from each of the settlements to obtain a total of 89966 homes. The sample was drawn from 4527 localities.

A total of 4284 public schools and 1171 private schools were used in the study. The research employed a regression model for inferential analysis. The data showed that when mothers had higher levels of education, their children did better in school.

In Kenya, Wakiuru (2016) researched on how parents' socioeconomic position affected their involvement in their children's pre-school education in the neighborhood Kayole, Nairobi County. The study employed descriptive survey design. A total of 35 pre-school educators and 120 parents were selected by simple random sampling. Data was collected by use of questionnaires and interview guides. Descriptive statistics, such as frequency, percentages and means were used to analyze quantitative data. Inferential statistics particularly Chi-square was used to tested the hypothesis. The findings showed that parental involvement in preschool increases with the height of the parent's highest level of education. That parents who had completed more years of schooling were more likely to be involved in their children's early education. Parental involvement in decision making, communication, and collaboration with their child's pre-school was measured in this study.

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Accordingly, parental support for their children's education has been linked to their education in other studies. For example, Davis-Kean, Tighe, and Waters (2021) claim that parents' expectations for their children's academic success fluctuate with their own degree of schooling based on their own ideas about how they learned as children. According to the study's findings, parents with advanced degrees are more invested in their children's academic achievement. The findings are in line with those of Suizzo and Stapleton (2007) showed that mums with higher levels of education set higher standards for their children's academic performance.

This implies that the children's academic success is strongly influenced by their parents' degree of education. In other words, offspring of college-educated parents were more likely to follow in their footsteps. Parents with higher levels of education tend to focus more time and energy on their children and on academic issues. They serve as inspirations, and the students respond by getting involved in extracurricular activities at school. Davis-Kean, Tighe, and Waters (2021) argue that successful management is improved when parents are involved in their children's schools. However, Bashir, Jafari, Malik, and Hayat's (2021) study contributes little to our understanding of how parental education affects school administration. On the other hand, Wakiuru (2016) only looked at how parents' socioeconomic position affected their involvement in their children's pre-school. As such, due to the study's narrow scope, they present very little knowledge about the influence of parental level of education on management of public ECDE centres. The current study addressed the knowledge gap with a focus on public ECDE centres in Makueni county, Kenya.

3.1 Research Design and Methodology

The Convergent design which is under a mixed approach guided the study. Convergent design combines qualitative and quantitative methods for a more thorough understanding of the research problem (Razali, et al., 2019). The purpose of the convergent design is to provide a wide analysis of the research problem as it merges quantitative and qualitative data (Razali, et al., 2019). Convergent designs was considered appropriate for the study because it permits the provision of in-depth information regarding the topic of research, a knowledge of the research challenge, and clarification of a given research outcome.

Under quantitative approach, the researcher used the cross-sectional survey design. The researcher used this design to collect data from various categories of participants, that is, Early Childhood teachers, and head teachers, Sub-count Directors of Education and parent representatives. It is also quick, inexpensive, as well as it does not face serious ethics scrutiny, unless the information collected is confidential in nature (Aggarwal, & Ranganathan, 2019). The cross-sectional study design involved the collection of information on the variables of interest, using the quantitative data collection instrument. In qualitative approach, participatory action research was used to gain a deeper understanding on the topic of study based on first-hand experience (Tomaszewski, Zarestky, & Gonzalez, 2020).

The target population for this study consisted of all 904 head teachers managing the public primary schools where the pre-primary schools are established, 904 ECDE parent representatives (center treasurers), 2250 pre-primary teachers (950 employed by County government and 1300 employed by parents), 30 sub county ECDE coordinators, and the County

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Director of Education (CDE). The research sample size was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan table (Krejcie, & Morgan, 1970). Accordingly, the accessible population consisted of 875 respondents distributed as 269 head teachers, 269 parent representatives (center treasurers), and 327 pre-primary teachers all from 269 selected schools and 30 sub-County ECDE coordinators, and the CDE calculated based on study sample size percentage (29.8%).

The study used probability; simple random sampling, stratified random sampling and systematic sampling, and non-probability sampling technique; purposive sampling techniques to sample target groups mainly because of the varying characteristics describing the target Population. A questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data from head teachers, ECDE teachers, and parent representatives (ECDE centre treasurers). Interview guides collected data from head teachers, sub county ECDE coordinators, and the County Director of Education. The instruments were validated with the help of experts in research and administration in terms of their content, criterion and face validity (Mohajan, 2017). Internal consistency reliability was used to assess the reliability survey's quantitative data while qualitative data from interview guide was determined in terms of data dependability, credibility and Member checking. The study data was summarized using descriptive statistics, especially frequency, percentage, standard deviation, and averages. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed to compare means whereas linear regression analysis was employed for hypothesis testing.

4.0 Findings, Discussions and Interpretations

This segment presents the study response rate, descriptive and inferential statistics based on the analysis of respondent feedback on the questionnaires and interview guides.

4.1 Response Rate

Instrument return rate as explained by Afolayan and Oniyinde (2019) refers to the number of respondents who returned useable research instruments issued out of the total number of respondents contacted during the study. The researcher administered a questionnaire to all the sampled head teachers, Early Childhood Development Education teachers (ECDE), and parent representatives (ECDE centres treasurers). The researcher also interviewed the sampled sub county ECDE coordinators in whole of the Makueni county, head teachers, and the County Director of Education. The response rate of each category of the respondents is presented in Table 1.

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Table 1: Instruments Return Rate

Respondents Category	Instruments	Issued (N)	Returned (n)	Return Rate
Head teachers	Questionnaire	269	204	75.8%
	FGDs	20	15	75 %
Parent Representative (ECDE center treasurers)	Questionnaire	269	252	93.7%
	Questionnaire	327	260	79.5%
County Director of Education	Interviews	1	1	100.0%
Sub County ECDE Coordinators	Interviews	30	25	83.3%
TOTAL		1165	931	79.9%

Source: Field Data, 2023

Out of the 1,165 sampled respondents by the researcher, only 931 responded to the research queries representing a response rate of 79.9%. According to Orodho (2017), in social sciences, a response rate of 70% and above is sufficient to validate the study findings. Thus, at 79.9%, this figure was considered adequate enough to enable the researcher to proceed with data analysis.

4.2 Parents Highest Level of Education

Head teachers, ECDE teachers, and parent representatives who are the Centre treasurers were issued with questionnaires in order to obtain their views on influence of parental level of education on management of public ECDE centers. The head teachers, sub county ECDE coordinators, and the County Director of Education officer were interviewed to triangulate the responses obtained from the questionnaires. First, the study sought to determine the highest level of education attained by the study participants which enabled the researcher to determine the accuracy of data collected. The Early Childhood Development and Education Centre parents and head teachers were asked to give information on their education level. Table 2 presents the findings.

Table 2: Highest Level of Education Attained by Majority of Parents n=204

Education Level	Frequency	Percent (%)
Primary	133	65.2
Secondary	60	29.4
College	10	4.9
University	1	0.5
Grand Total	204	100.0

Source: Field Data, 2023

Data from Table 2, indicate that a majority of 133(65.2%), of the head teachers stated that majority of the parents/guardians had attained primary level (KCPE) as their highest level of education. Similarly 60 (29.4%) stated that most of the parents/guardian had attained secondary level, 10 (4.9%) stated college level, while 1 (0.5%) of the head teachers stated that majority of

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the parents had a university level of education. From the analysis in Table 2, majority of the parents therefore in public ECDE centres in Makueni County have primary education as their highest level of education. The researcher found that parents who were illiterate or semi-illiterate and jobless could not see the need of funding education. The findings concur with majority of sub county ECDE coordinators submission that at times they had to use local law enforcement personnel to force parents to take their children to school.

4.3 Influence of Parental Level of Education on Effective Management of Public Early Childhood Development Education Centre

The researcher sought to determine the influence of parental education level on management of public ECDE centres. The participating head teachers, ECDE teachers, and parent representatives were given different questionnaires with related statements. Each respondent was required to indicate his/her views by ticking (√) the appropriate box to indicate the level of agreement by use of the key: 1= Strongly Disagree (SD), 2= Disagree (D), 3=Undecided (UD), 4=Agree (A), 5=Strongly Agree (SA). These were categorized into three levels as 1.0 – 2.4 = disagree, 2.5 – 3.4 = undecided and 3.5 – 5.0 agree. Tables 3, 4, and 5 present respondents views. The analysis of their findings were merged in three (3) categories; the strongly disagree (SD) and disagree (D) to form disagreeing option, the neutral (N) remains as a category and agree (A) and strongly agree (SA) forming agreeing option. Table 4 presents the head teachers' responses. The approach was preferred because it captured the general opinion of respondents. The combination of scores was guided by Warmbrod (2014) who postulates that scores derived from the Likert scale are summated scores determined by a composite of responses to multiple items rather than responses to single items.

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Table 3: Head teachers Responses on the Influence of Parental Level of Education on Effective Management of Public ECDE Centres n=204

Statements	SD		D		N		A		SA		Mean	Std. Dev
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
i. Highly educated people motivate centre administrator.	24	(11.8)	34	(16.7)	36	(17.6)	66	(32.4)	44	(21.5)	4.2	1.46
ii. Highly educated people offer proposal to head teachers on effective leadership style.	18	(8.8)	34	(16.7)	31	(15.2)	85	(41.7)	36	(17.6)	4.5	1.61
iii. Educated parents provide proposal on budgets in order to lower costs.	16	(7.8)	44	(21.5)	42	(20.7)	76	(37.3)	26	(12.7)	4.3	1.52
iv. Educated parents are able create conducive environment for dialogue.	12	(5.9)	34	(16.7)	33	(16.2)	89	(43.6)	36	(17.6)	4.6	1.68
v. Educated parents would highly buy learning aids for their children.	10	(4.9)	24	(11.8)	40	(19.6)	94	(46.1)	36	(17.6)	4.4	1.54
vi. A parents' perception on education is a determinant of enrolling their children to a school as well as participating in schools' activities.	9	(4.4)	19	(9.3)	33	(16.2)	92	(45.1)	51	(25.0)	4.5	1.61
vii. Education level of parents/guardians increases their level of involvement in school decision making processes.	9	(4.4)	14	(6.9)	35	(17.2)	104	(51.0)	42	(20.6)	4.7	1.72
viii. Parent's/guardian's education level influence pupils' academic achievement.	9	(4.4)	20	(9.8)	23	(11.3)	103	(50.5)	49	(24.0)	4.7	1.72
ix. Highly educated	10	(4.9)	15	(7.4)	14	(6.9)	92	(45.0)	73	(35.8)	4.6	1.68

parents/guardians motivate their children more on education matters than lowly educated.								
x. Acceptability of most school activities depends on the level of education of parents.	8(3.9)	27(13.3)	25(12.3)	92(45.0)	52(25.5)	4.5	1.61	
Average						4.5	1.62	

Source: Field Data, 2023

Results in Table 3, 110 (53.9%), of the head teachers agreed that highly educated people motivate centre administrator while 58(28.4%) disagreed. A minority of 36(17.6%) of the respondents were neutral; the mean of 4.2 indicate the majority agreed. Educated parents know the importance of motivation; by appreciating the administrators work, they create an environment where they can thrive, become devoted to their jobs and contribute to the success of the schools. The Sub County Directors of Education emphasized idea that educated parents instill discipline to their children which in turn supports the management and development of ECDE Centres in the county. However, he added divergent view in an interview when he said:

Majority of the parents in the county have low levels of education, and this has a negative influence of development and management of ECDE centres. Most of these parents are not in a position to assist their children in resolving homework, neither are they capable of providing guidance and counseling and at the same to represent their children in school matters (Sub County Directors of Education).

Regarding whether a highly educated people offer proposal to head teachers on effective leadership and management style 121 (59.3%) of the head teacher respondents agreed, another 52(25.5%) disagreed while 31(15.2%) were neutral. The high mean score of 4.5 imply a strong agreement. This implies, therefore, that educated parents have knowledge of effective leadership and how they lead the institution to success. They share the ideas with school leaders and assist them to set up clear goals, communicate the same with teachers and students to spend most of the time on instruction. The findings concur with Grossom, Loeb and Master (2013) who advocate that effective leadership exhibit excellent professionalism and interpersonal skills and act as coaches to both students and teachers to improve instruction.

On whether educated parents provide proposal and ideas on budgets ratifications in order to lower costs, a majority of 102 (50.0%) of the head teachers respondents' agreed while 60(29.4%) disagreed with the same statement and 42(20.7%) were neutral. The high mean score of 4.2 suggest their accenting to the statement. Some parents are very informative on budgetary processes; hence their active involvements assist school administration to make realistic budgets. They can identify sources of funds, approve appropriate expenditures and encourage parents to pay fees promptly to enable head teachers manage the school activities effectively. In another

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statement the study participants were asked whether educated parents are able create conducive environment for dialogue. In response to the statement, a majority of 125 (61.3%), of the participating head teachers agreed, another 46(25.5%) disagreed while 33(1.2%) remained neutral. The participating head teachers were also asked if educated parents would highly buy learning aids for their children; the majority of 130 (63.7%) agreed; a minority of 36(16.7%) disagreed while 40(19.6%) did remained neutral with the assertion. Educated parents understand the effect of learning aids to pupils. For instance, using extra text books at home reinforce the skills taught in class; availing educational videos bring reality into a classroom and an observation in the field makes learning more real and practical.

Similarly, 143 (70.1%), of the head teachers agreed that a parents' perception on education is a determinant of enrolling their children to a school as well as participating in schools' activities. On whether education level of parents/guardians increases their level of involvement in school decision making processes, majority of the head teachers 146 (71.6%) agreed with this statement. Such parents' level of knowledge and understanding is high and can contribute ideas for decision making. It is also important to note that 152 (74.5%), of the head teachers agreed that parent's/guardian's education level influence pupils' academic achievement. This is because they at times assist their children in doing homework assignments and monitor their progress. Head teachers were also asked if highly educated parents/guardians motivate their children more on education matters than lowly educated and 165 (80.8%) who were majority of them agreed with this assertion.

Finally, 144 (70.5%), of the head teachers agreed that acceptability of most school activities depends on the level of education of parents. Further, the researcher also sought to determine the views of the Early Childhood Development and Education teachers on the influence of parental level of education on effective management of public ECDE centres in Makueni County. Their responses are illustrated in Table 4.

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Table 4: ECDE Teachers Responses on the Influence of Parental Level of Education on Effective Management of Public ECDE Centres n=260

Statements	SD		D		N		A		SA		Mean	Std. Dev
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
i. Most parents get involved in children’s academic achievements, like help them in doing their homework.	20(7.7)		42(16.2)		90(34.5)		93(35.8)		15(5.8)		4.3	1.52
ii. Most children are provided with extra learning materials apart from the recommended ones by the school.	48(18.5)		100(38.5)		44(16.9)		50(19.2)		18(6.9)		2.4	1.24
iii. Parent’s education level has an impact on their children’s academic performance.	13(5.0)		23(8.8)		46(17.7)		94(36.2)		84(32.3)		4.1	1.42
iv. Motivation level for learners depends on parent’s level of education.	15(5.8)		31(11.9)		33(12.7)		120(46.1)		61(23.5)		4.2	1.46
v. Involvement of parents/guardians in academic activities has an influence on the management of ECDE centre.	13(5.0)		19(7.3)		44(16.9)		118(45.4)		66(25.4)		4.4	1.54
vi. Children diaries are always signed correctly.	34(13.1)		71(27.3)		45(17.3)		89(34.2)		21(8.1)		4.3	1.52

vii.	There is reduced rate of children losing books as parents support them.	26(10.0)	60(23.2)	75(28.8)	82(31.5)	17(6.5)	4.1	1.42
viii.	Educated parents attend academic clinics more than the lowly educated parents	16(6.2)	31(11.9)	39(15.0)	115(44.2)	59(22.7)	4.6	1.68
ix.	Cooperation of educated parents is higher than that of the lowly educated parents	16(6.2)	29(11.1)	39(15.0)	115(44.2)	61(23.5)	4.4	1.54
x.	Educated parents contributes on varied ways of class management in academic clinics	13(5.0)	35(13.5)	38(14.6)	117(45.0)	57(21.9)	4.5	1.61
Average							4.13	1.59

Source: Field Data, 2023

The findings in Table 4, 108 (41.6%), of the ECDE teachers agreed that most parents get involved in children’s academic achievements, like to help them in doing their homework. This could only apply to parents with high level of education who provide opportunities for their children to succeed. For instance, they provide extra reading books at home to practice what they learn in class. Also, by taking their children to enriched learning environments like libraries, museums and game parks provide real life learning experiences that complement classroom learning activities. Similarly, 148 (57.0%), of the ECDE teachers disagreed that most children are provided with extra learning materials apart from the recommended ones by the school. This is because most parents have low economic status; their poverty reduces their capability of buying extra reference books and other learning materials and even their children have difficult in completing schools. This was confirmed by one head teacher (Teacher 1) in one of the FGDs when the head teacher said:

Majority of the parents in the county have low levels of education, and this has a negative influence of development and management of ECDE Centres. Most of represent their children in school matters. On the other hand, educated parents instill discipline to their children. This in turn supports the management and development of ECDE Centres in the county (Head Teacher 1).

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The response of head teacher shows that low parental level of education inhibits their full support in school management. Their lack of knowledge on management skills or lacks of understanding on the importance of learning resources for their children inhibit their getting extra learning materials for their children practice at home. During interviews, the finding was supported by one of the Sub County Director of Education when he said:

Majority of parent's level of education in Makueni County is low. This therefore negatively affects smooth running of ECDE centres as school managers do not get the required support from parents which could enable them to implement effective learning programmes in their respective ECDE centres. Such parents feel that ECDE is wastage of resources and prefer their children to begin school in grade one.. Low levels of education by parent's means working in low paying jobs, taking little time on academic activities with their children and leaving them unattended with no one to assist them do homework; this is a hindrance to any particular development including ECDE development programmes (Sub County Director of Education).

The responses of both the head teachers and the Sub-County Directors of Education indicate that since the majority of parents' education is quite low; it inhibits their supporting the management of the school. This could be the reason why ECDE centres are not well developed in the county. In another statement, ECDE teachers were requested to state whether parent's education level has an impact on their children's academic performance. In response to this statement, a majority of 178 (68.5%) of the ECDE teachers agreed. ECDE teachers were also asked if motivation level for learners depends on parent's level of education and 181 (69.6%), the majority agreed with this statement. Similarly, 184 (70.8%), of the ECDE teachers agreed that involvement of parents/guardians in academic activities may have some influence on the management of ECDE centre. For instance, teachers do give and write homework assignment in pupil's diaries to be done at home. The parent or the guardian's role is to ensure the pupils have done the assignment. This cooperation makes pupils work hard and improve performance. The finding was echoed by 110 (42.3%) of the ECDE teachers who agreed that children diaries are always signed correctly. Another 99 (38.0%), of the ECDE teachers agreed that there is reduced rate of children losing books as parents support them. The finding concurs with that of Mutea (2022) who points out that parental engagement in Competence Based Curriculum is crucial for their children's achievement.

On whether educated parents attend academic clinics more than the lowly educated parents, 174 (66.9%), who were the majority of the ECDE teachers agreed with this statement. However, this finding was negated by some of the head teachers when the teacher said:

...a smaller number of parents in the region have college and university level of education. However, such parents are engaged elsewhere and therefore have no time to attend ECDE management meetings in the respective ECDE Centres.

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Failure to attend meetings implies some parents remain ignorant of what goes on in schools as well as the challenges their children face in learning. The finding is not in line with the New Competency Based Curriculum (CBC) that emphasize the need of parental engagement in their children's' learning when at home and at times in school to promote their development. On the other hand 176 (67.7%), of the ECDE teachers also agreed that cooperation of educated parents is higher than that of the lowly educated parents. Lastly, 174 (66.9%), of the ECDE teachers agreed that educated parents contributes on varied ways of class management in academic clinics. The researcher sought to views from parent representatives (Centre treasurers) on the influence of parental level of education on effective management of public early childhood development education centers. Their responses are presented in Table 5.

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Table 5: Parent Representatives (Treasurers) Responses on the Influence of Parental Level of Education on Effective Management of Public Early Childhood Development Education n=252

Statements	SD		D		N		A		SA		Me an	Std Dev
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
i. Involvement in the discussions on financial needs of the centre depends on parent’s level of education.	23	(9.1)	36	(14.3)	46	(18.3)	98	(38.9)	49	(19.4)	4.3	1.52
ii. Parent’s level of education has an impact on the management of ECDE centres.	14	(5.5)	27	(10.7)	45	(17.9)	104	(41.3)	62	(24.6)	4.4	1.54
iii. General oversight on the use of school resources depends on parent’s level of education.	18	(7.1)	54	(21.4)	47	(18.7)	91	(36.1)	42	(16.7)	4.2	1.48
iv. Responsiveness to pay school levies depends on parent’s level of education.	25	(9.9)	52	(20.6)	45	(17.9)	91	(36.1)	39	(15.5)	4.2	1.48
v. Involvement of parents/guardians in academic activities has an influence on the management of ECDE centre.	10	(4.0)	28	(11.1)	42	(16.7)	119	(47.2)	53	(21.0)	4.6	1.68
vi. Educated parents are able to propose ways to fundraise in order to support school activities.	21	(8.4)	30	(11.9)	49	(19.4)	98	(38.9)	54	(21.4)	4.3	1.52
vii. Educated parents provide proposal on budgets in order to lower costs.	26	(10.3)	44	(17.5)	58	(23.0)	71	(28.2)	53	(21.0)	4.1	1.42
viii. Educated parents are able create conducive environment for dialogue.	17	(6.7)	31	(12.4)	49	(19.4)	98	(38.9)	57	(22.6)	4.3	1.52
ix. Most parents are willing	72	(28.5)	96	(38.4)	39	(15.5)	30	(11.9)	15	(6.0)	2.4	1.2

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to offer their services)	1)	5)					4
like medical services for free to the centre.							
x. Educated parents are more concerned with the financial status of the centre than the lowly educated.	23(9.1)	52(20.7)	56(22.2)	73(29.0)	48(19.0)	4.1	1.4
						4.0	1.4
Average						9	8

Source: Field Data, 2023

The School treasurers participants were asked to give their views as to whether that involvement in the discussions on financial needs of the centre depends on parent’s level of education. The findings in Table 5, show that a majority of 147 (58.3%) of the school treasures agreed, another 39(15.5%) disagreed while 46 (18.3%) remained neutral. The means score of 4.3 imply that majority were in agreement with the statement. In another statement regarding whether the parent’s level of education has an impact on the management of ECDE centres, a majority of 166 (65.9%) agreed while the minorities of 41(16.3%) disagreed and 45(17.9) were neutral with the statement. The high mean of 4.4 indicate a strong accent to the given view. These imply that educated parents have knowledge, skills and have positive attitudes towards school improvement. They are, therefore, able to assist the school head to plan and coordinate activities of the school than parents with low education. Parental educational attainment is most believed to be a stronger predictor of a parents’ culture, behavior as well as beliefs (Duncan, & Magnuson, 2003; Davis-Kean, Tighe, & Waters, 2021). In this regard, parents/guardians’ conviction’s in taking up management roles when called upon in other words volunteering, decision making, offering proposals, supporting children learning at home, depends mostly on their level of education and availability. Parental education is thus important in their involvement and participation in school activities (Đurišić, & Bunijevac, 2017). The sentiment was echoed by one head teacher in one of the FGD when they said:

Majority of parents for ECDE learners are holders of Kenya Certificate of Education (KCPE) certificate holders and below. This means that the likelihood of majority of these parents contributing much into school management activities is somehow reduced, which thus negatively affects effective running of ECDE centres. The other small group of parents falls under Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE). It is hard for this group to currently secure good paying employment in Kenya as the ceiling is high where most people are now learned. However, even though they qualified to be among the board managers, they still did not have money to support school management (HeadTeacher 2).

The responses from the FGD of the head teachers indicate that parents’ low level of education has had a negative impact in their support in the management of the school. These parents are

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neither in a position to assist their children in resolving homework nor capable of providing guidance and counseling. The finding was supported by the Sub-county Director of Education in an interview when he said:

Majority of the parents in the county have low levels of education, and this has a negative influence of development and management of ECDE centres. Most of these parents are not in a position to assist their children in resolving homework, neither are they capable of providing guidance and counseling and at the same to represent their children in school matters. On the other hand, educated parents instill discipline to their children. This in turn supports the management and development of ECDE centres in the county (Sub-county Director of Education).

On whether general oversight on the use of school resources depends on parent's level of education, 133 (52.8%) of the centre treasurers) agreed with this assertion. Furthermore, 130 (51.6%), of the parent representatives (school treasurers agreed that responsiveness to pay school levies/fees depends on parent's level of education. Parent representatives (centre treasurers) were also asked if involvement of parents/guardians in academic activities has an influence on the management of ECDE centre and 172 (68.2%) of them agreed with this statement.

With respect to the notion that educated parents are able to propose ways to fundraise in order to support school activities, a majority of 152 (60.3%) centre treasurers agreed. This implies that such parents are capable of contributing ideas for raising funds to support the management of the school. These include the giving food stuff and other items for sale during the day of fund raising, design raffle tickets as well as inviting other people to contribute towards a given project. However, another group of 51(20.2%) disagreed while 49(19.4%) remained neutral to the similar statement. The County Director of Education concurred during interview when he had this to say :

The low number of parents who are educated in the county means majority struggle to pay their children's school fees. This also affects the ECDE managers who have difficulties as well in paying teachers' salaries in time. This makes the whole system ineffective as majority of them are semi-illiterate or illiterate and cannot afford financial resources. This is because their earning is low as a result of academic qualification

On whether educated parents provide proposal on budgets in order to lower costs, 124 (49.2%) parent representatives (centre treasurers)agreed, another 70(27.6%) disagreed while 44(17.5%) were undecided. The mean score of 4.1 indicate agreement with the statement. A few parents who had attained degree level of education may help the school in drawing up a good budget that comprises of a net income, fixed expenses, flexible expenses as well as other miscellaneous expenses estimates. These would help reduce unnecessary costs and expenditure and enable the school to operate within their budgets.

Further, 155 (61.5%), of the parent representatives (centre treasurers) agreed that educated parents are able to create conducive environment for dialogue. Such parents understand

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the importance of communication in an organization. For instance, dialogue sessions encourage group sharing of ideas for sorting out issues. Parent representatives (centre treasurers) were also asked if most parents are willing to offer their services like medical services for free to the centre and 168 (66.6%) of them disagreed with this statement. This is in line with the findings on the level of education reached by parents as primary school, hence cannot offer such medical services. They lack grades for further training.

Finally, 121 (48.0%), of the parent representatives (centre treasurers) agreed that educated parents are more concerned with the financial status of the centre than the lowly educated. In overall, 71.2% of the head teachers, ECDE teachers, and parent representatives (centre treasurers) agreed with majority of the statements from Tables 3, 4, and 5. This meant that educated parents/guardians participated and contributed more on ECDE management matters than the lowly educated parents/guardians. Furthermore, using the five-point Likert scale, head teachers' average mean response of 4.5, ECDE teachers' average mean response of 4.13, and parent representatives' average mean response of 4.09 suggests that majority of the head teachers, ECDE teachers, and parent representatives (centre treasurers) agreed with these perceptions that parental education level influences management of ECDE centres. From the findings it is evident that parental education level influenced management of ECDE centres by giving leadership financial and managerial guidance and counseling. These results are converging with Davis-Kean, Tighe, and Waters (2021) that parental education attainment offers a foundation that supports their children academic success as well as school activities.

The qualitative results from the interviews thus show that 100% of the head teacher and sub county ECDE coordinators agreed that parental level of education influence management of ECDE centres. Nonetheless, in Makueni county management of public ECDE centres has been impacted by low education levels of majority of the parents. As such parental participation and involvement in preschool activities is somehow low. The researcher found that the county government is trying its best in improving the infrastructure (construction of preschool classes), improving ICT through provision of android phones to aid pupils learn, and human resource by recruiting one (1) ECDE teacher per centre.

4.4 Inferential Statistics

Regression analysis was used to establish if there was a statistically significant influence of parental level of education on management of public ECDE centres in Makueni County, Kenya. The results are as presented in Tables 6, 7, and 8.

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Table 6: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.736 ^a	0.753	0.727	1.518

Table 6 shows that $R^2=0.753$, the coefficient of determination indicates that 75.3% of the variation in management of public ECDE centres is influenced by parental level of education. The ANOVA Table 7 was used to indicate how well the regression fits the data ($\alpha=5\%$).

Table 7: Analysis of Variance

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	117.115	1	117.115	105.036	.000 ^b
	Residual	796.421	714	1.115		
	Total	913.536	715			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Parental level of Education

b. Dependent Variable: Management of ECDE centres

Table 7 shows that the regression equation statistically significantly predicts the outcome variable. This means, parental level of education contributes statistically significantly to the study model (p -value < 0.05).

Table 8 illustrates the influencing power of parental level of education in the model or on management of public ECDE centres.

Table 8: Coefficients of Variation

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
(Constant)	4.597	3.658			2.056	.000
Parental Level of Education	0.716	0.115	0.684		1.362	.002

a. Dependent Variable: Management of ECDE centres

Table 8 indicates that parental level of education in the model is statistically significant (p -value < 0.05). Accordingly, the study reject the null hypothesis (H_{01}) and state that parental level of education in the model is significantly different from zero (0). This means, for every increase in the parental level of education, management of ECDE centre is predicted to change by 0.716 points.

Management of Public ECDE Centres (Y)

$$= 4.597 + 0.716 H_{\text{Parental level of education}} + \epsilon$$

5. Conclusion

Based on the study findings, the study concluded that majority of the parents from the sampled public ECDE centres in Makueni county have primary education as their highest level of education. Accordingly, the researcher found that the educated parents/guardians occasionally gave their views to the administrators from which substantial decisions could be drawn to help

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them run the ECDE centres. The researcher also found that educated working parent motivated administrators financially by donating food, materials and sometimes awarding the best performing teachers in the institution. However, some were busy elsewhere not attending school meetings.

Similarly, as the educated parents were involved more in the ECDE center activities than the lowly educated, it presented clear evidence that parental level of education was a key determinant for their participation as well as contribution on ECDE management matters. As such, the study concluded that parental level of education influenced management of public ECDE centres in Makueni, county, Kenya.

6.0 Recommendations

Parents/guardians should be informed through defined forums on the importance of participation and support early childhood education and cooperation with ECDE teachers for development of their children. This step will help cover the lowly educated parents in society.

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