

ABSTRACT

In Kenya all efforts and commitment to Education For All (EFA) to realize vision 2030 is put in place by financing basic education. The Ministry of education has not included early childhood education in terms of implementation. This then has created a problem in the decline of enrollment at pre-school levels, hence affecting retention and attendance rates. The study was guided by the social judgment theory by Hovland Sheif. The purpose of the study was to determine the influence of parental attitudes on low enrolment of learners in ECDE centres in Nyamira South Sub- County. The study objectives were; to find out how parental attitude on pre-school teachers influence low enrolment rates in the ECDE centres, to examine how parental attitudes on pre-school entry age influence low enrolment rates in pre-school centres, to determine how parental attitudes on the kind of education given to ECDE influence low enrolment in ECDE centres and to establish how parental attitudes on fee payment for ECDE learners influence low enrolment in Nyamira South Sub-County. The study employed concurrent triangulation design, utilizing a mixed method approach. The target population for this study was 4,058 respondents who included 82 public schools headteachers, 246 pre-school teachers, 1 Sub-County Programme Officer and 3,729 parents in Nyamira South Sub-County. Stratified random sampling techniques were used in organizing schools into 7 zones in the Sub-County. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 3 primary schools for the study from each zone with the least number of schools, 4 primary schools with the second highest number of schools and 5 schools were chosen from the zone which had the highest number of schools. Purposive sampling was used to select 1 ECD Sub-County Programme Officer, 26 primary headteachers, 74 ECD teachers were selected from the primary schools selected for the study and 373 parents were selected. Snowball sampling was used to get 373 ECD parents. The study used four instruments in collecting data namely, questionnaires, interview schedule, observation and document analysis guide. The study ensured reliability of the instruments by administering the instruments after two weeks by using test retest method in the 7 schools that had similar characteristics as the study sample. Validity was ensured through presentation of the questionnaires and interview schedule to the supervisors for critique. A reliability coefficient of 0.766 was reported. Quantitative data was analyzed by use of descriptive and inferential statistics while qualitative data was done through the thematic framework. The study reported that there was a considerable positive correlation ($r = .522$) between parents' attitudes on pre-school teachers and low enrolment rate of the pre-school learners. There was a significant positive correlation ($r = .672$) between parents' attitudes on entry age on enrolment rate of the learners. There was a significant positive correlation ($r = .713$) between parental attitudes towards the kind of education on low enrolment rate of the learners. There was a significant positive correlation ($r = .774$) between parental attitudes on fee payment on low enrolment rate of the learners. The study recommended that parents should have good and positive attitudes towards pre-school teachers, relate with them cordially and corporate with them for joint upbringing of the child, The Ministry of Education should be encouraged to formulate appropriate educational policies that address the best practices to be carried out in ECDE centres such as the best age of admission to pre-schools, Parents should consider appreciating the kind of educational activities at the preschool centres. Headteachers should endeavour to hold parents meetings to enlighten them on the importance of pre-school education and encourage the parents to have positive attitude towards ECDE fee payment since it is a community based sector.