



Relationship between Mothers' Socio-Economic Engagement and Preprimary School Pupils' Participation in Learning in Kilifi South Sub-County, Kilifi County, Kenya

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Author's contribution

The sole author designed, analysed, interpreted and prepared the manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to establish the relationship between mothers' socio-economic engagement and pre-primary school children's school participation in learning in pre-school units under public elementary schools found in Kilifi South Sub-county of Kilifi County, Kenya. There has been underlying problem in Kilifi County that the research study sought to look into; that despite the remarkable increase of mothers in socio- economic activities in the county, little had been done to analyze the reason as to why the pre-school children's school participation in learning was still very low. The investigation also looked into the influence of mothers' income and occupation, level of mothers' education and their attitude towards preschool children's school participation in learning. Importance of investing in early years of children and how it relates to children's school participation was also looked into. The rationale of this study was to shed dipper light and increase greater understanding on the influence of mothers' socio- economic engagement on pre-school children to

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as many stakeholders of pre-school education as possible. The study adopted a descriptive survey design with a sample of 195 children, 23 teachers, and 11 mothers' representatives on board. Questionnaires were used to gather information from pre-school teachers, observation schedules from children while interview schedules were employed to assemble information from socio-economic engaged mothers. Thematic techniques were used to manage qualitative data from questionnaires after the data had been analyzed through statistics. Target population of this study were mothers' representatives, pre-school teachers and children in Kilifi County. With regard to the first objective, the study findings disclosed that there was a significant positive correlation between mother's occupation and income level and children's school participation in Kilifi County. A significant positive correlation between mothers' level of education and children's school participation in learning in the county was also shown by the study. Findings also showed that there was a significance positive correlation between mothers attitude towards educational and school participation in Kilifi County. Lastly, study outcomes at the same time established that mothers' awareness of the significance of the early years enhances children school participation in Kilifi South of Kilifi County.

Keywords: Socio-economic engagement; preprimary school pupils; learning.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

A.E	: Approaching Expectation
B. E	: Below Expectation
BOM	: Board of Management
CBC	: Competence Based Curriculum
E.E	: Exceeding Expectation
GOK	: Government of Kenya
M.E	: Meeting Expectation
MOE	: Ministry of Education
NACOSTI	: National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovative.
NGO	: Non-Governmental Organization
PTA	: Parents Teachers Association
SEE	: Socio-Economic Engagement
SES	: Socio-Economic Status

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Early childhood Care and Education (ECCE) is more of construction of well built foundation for primary school. It intends to enhance holistic development of children's domains such as social, emotional, cognitive and physical needs in order to build a solid and broad foundation for lifelong learning and well-being (Faulkner, D & Coates, E. 2013). ECCE has the capability to incubate compassionate, competent and reliable forthcoming citizens. It can make a very significant input in the lives of young children in that it promotes brain development (Weisberg et al. 2014). It gives children positive long term economic benefits, avails the 21st century skills which help to prepare them for higher achievements in school and life beyond school and hence empowering their life aspirations to see the light of the day [1].

Education is a very core human right and a backbone to buoyancy of the economy; a paramount instrument for efficient participation in societies and it elevates harmony as well as durability amongst nations. Three conditions must become functional in the academic pursuit which are the family, the school and the society Nomiya (2003); Posse and Malgasa (2002). The studies stated that in order for a triumphant educational experience to be radical the objectives of these three conditions have to be conformed to each other, but most importantly the family which is the first and the basic environmental unit that learning must be very conducive and stimulating to the children.

Globally speaking, early childhood care and education is a very foundational and vital source of learning, especially during the early years. It enables children to develop language concepts and communication competences. In addition, it offers practice in using their physical and motor skills as well as equipping them with values such as co-operation and ability to follow rules (Campbell-Barr, 2017).

Diane Hughes and Pamel A. Maris (2012) examined the influence of mothers on African children's school achievement and participation. They focused on mothers' level of education, marital status, family occupation and income and found out that children from families whose mothers have high level of education and socio – economically engaged in high income jobs enjoy the privilege of having a better learning environment at home. This is due to availability of educational resources such as television, computers, I- pads among others that have

capacity to enhance their children's learning even at home.

The researchers opined that, mothers' education has a great impact on children's school outcomes. The concept of mother's capital refers to individual knowledge, skills and abilities which they grow principally via education and 'capitalize' on it in the workforce (Paradis & Gruter, 2014). Well educated mothers furthermore utilize a broader vocabulary and they don't just compliment their children but also repeat and build on what they say more generously compared to less educated mothers. Thus acquiring lots of words early in life is fastened to better academic outcomes down the road, so mothers' early conversation with kids' commands long lasting significance.

Maternal education also greatly counts later in childhood. College educated mothers are capable of more suitably facilitating cognitively stimulating activities to their children's developmental level and they are also enabled to support kids do their homework (Ariel San Jose & Buena Rigor, 2021). All these gear towards supporting children's cognitive development, which lays a strong foundation where other aspects of development such as language and social development can be laid and thus the children are motivated to participate well in their various school learning activities and process.

Despite the GOK's and NGO's toil to promote quality and fairness in Early Childhood Education to reach Kenyan children, counties like Kilifi still exhibits low pre – school children school participation. Agarwal (2018) posited that for proper and healthy preschool children school participation, mothers require a strong and reliable financial back up which can be acquired from proper economic empowerment through employment in well-paying jobs or self-employment with good income.

Despite that in Kilifi County a large group of mothers are socio – economically engaged, the researcher has realized that, majority of those mothers are socio – economically engaged in odd jobs and those that are employed earn peanuts because the mothers are not or less educated to qualify them for better paying jobs. This in turn denies them the power to support their pre–primary school children in all aspects such as positive involvement, providing educational resources, knowledge on the significance of parent- child attachment and

bonding, proper nutrition and healthcare among others. Lack of provision of all these factors by the financially weak mothers translate into low school participation by their pre – primary school children.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

From interaction with most of the pre-school teachers and the young children, there has been a substantial acceleration of mothers flooding in socio-economic activities in Kilifi County. However, despite of this rise, not much has been done to scrutinize the reason as to why the pre-school children's school participation in learning is still low in relation to the big number of their mothers who are becoming socio-economically engaged. This is a serious omission particularly when put into consideration that pre-school is a very basic foundation for further learning since it provides very paramount experiences that children build extra learning on (Kilifi south sub-county director,2022).

In addition to this, some mothers in Kilifi County still hold onto wrong beliefs that pre-school education is not all that important to many children. Involving themselves in the academic journey of the older children who are in upper grades than those in lower grades and more so the pre-primary school is what the mothers would rather do. This has resulted in many pre-school children being poorly motivated to go to pre-school and even participate in taking part in various learning activities in school. As a result of this, pre-school children in Kilifi County have their different domains of growth and development being slow at such a foundational stage and thus leading to low school participation in learning. If their mothers will not adequately support the pre-school children, opportunities that would have been realized via proper and enhanced school participation in learning might become fore shut. This in the end will make it difficult for Kilifi County as part of Kenya to realize better performance in education.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The intention of this study was to determine the relationship between mothers' socio-economic engagement and their pre-primary school children's school participation in learning in Kilifi South of Kilifi County.

1.4 Objectives

- i) To determine the level to which mothers' occupation and level of income influences

their pre-primary school children's participation in learning.

- ii) To find out the extent to which mothers' level of education influences children's school participation in learning.
- iii) To establish the extent to which mothers' attitude towards education influences children's school participation in learning.
- iv) To determine the significance of early years in relation to pre-primary school children's school participation in learning.

1.5 Research Questions

The study was spearheaded by the research questions listed below:

- i) To what extent does mothers' occupation and level of income influence their pre-primary school children's school participation?
- ii) How does the mothers' level of education influences children's school participation?
- iii) To what extent does mothers' attitude towards education influences children's school participation?
- iv) What is the significance of early years in relation to pre-primary school children's school participation?

1.6 Significance of the Study

This research may be of exceptional paramountcy to the globe since education is one of the chief pillars to a sustainable economy. Kenya as a nation may also be set to benefit from the study since the young children if thoroughly equipped educationally through health school participation in learning will evolve to reliable and efficient citizens in the days to ahead. Various legislators in education, MOE, educators, parents amongst other children careers are among the study beneficiaries because the knowledge that will be gathered by the researcher shall impart to comprehensive understanding and insight of the force of mothers' socio-economic engagement on pre-primary school children's school participation. Various stake holders in education, may in addition use the findings from this study to address the problem of low school participation in Kilifi County. The pre-school children in this locale may finally have their school participation in learning enhanced because amongst other benefits their mothers will gain more knowledge and awareness on the importance of them investing in the early years of their children.

The rationale of this study is to shed deeper light and increase greater understanding on the influence of mothers' socio-economic engagements on pre-school children to as many stakeholders of pre-school education as possible such as NGOs thus enabling them to secure suitable knowledge on how to give outstanding services and participate in education sector through bettering children school participation. The study may also endow the body of knowledge in general by giving a more focused bearing to time ahead researchers who may wish to further their survey on alike subject.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

These are the huddles shouldered by the researcher in the process of carrying out the study. They include financial constraints that might have influenced the scope of the study in terms of monetary demands to cover the schools found in the geographical area of the entire Kilifi South Sub-County.

Another limitation for this study was the difficulty in splitting objective responses from the subjective ones especially on the sensitive aspect that touches the mothers' income level.

To overcome this financial challenge, the researcher engaged in a small scale business of selling vegetables and fruits after work as well as giving an assurance to mothers, that the information given would be used for nothing but academic intentions only as well as handled with confidentiality. The researcher further ensured to interview them separately. This was to overcome the challenge of discerning the objective responses from the subjective ones.

1.8 Operational Definition of Key Terms

Academic performance- Is the end results of the children's academic work after assessment. Academic performance in this study will be evaluated depending on the level of expectation met by the children. (Whether E.E, M.E, A.E and B.E) (Narad and Abdulla 2016).

Education- Is the undertaking of impacting or acquiring specific knowledge, skills and attitudes especially at school, college or university (Alison Gopnik, 2016).

Level of Education- This refers to the stage one reaches education wise from primary level, secondary level, tertiary level, and college or university stage (B. K Uzum, 2017).

Income- Income is the monetary remuneration that one receives from goods and services or from other sources such as investments and rents collected (J. R Brooks, 2018).

Occupation- This refers to activity that acts as one's regular source of livelihood. In this study, occupation will be looked into in relation to mothers' work content, occupational class and occupational prestige (formal or informal) (M. H Black, 2019).

Participation- This is the active involvement in various learning activities for actualization of knowledge (Yo John-Akinda, 2014).

Retention- Refers to the ability of education system to sustain the pupils enrolled within the system (N.R Mburung'a, 2016).

Socio-economic- The income generating activities (A Davin- Mattson, 2017).

Windows of Opportunities-They are optimum periods for specific areas of development. These are seasons where by learning in particular areas can develop at a very fast rate thus stimulation and some kinds of learning must take place for a child to develop full (Wickham, 2020)

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Mothers' Occupation and Level of Income and School Participation

Mothers' occupation influences school participation of their children and according to Egalite (2016) the higher the socioeconomic engagement group, the frequently they discussed with the teachers about their children's progress in school. Kabwira and Grace (2018) state that the wealthier the family, the appreciable the accomplishment and parents who earn high income send and retain children to school. As mothers' income rise in their occupation, they gain ability to improve gender quality amongst their children regardless of their sex (Miller & Anderman, 2014) & [2].

Availability of family's income is an implication that resources are available to the children and their needs are appropriately met. Mothers in better paying occupation have more income and are able to afford the essentials to capacitate them care for their children with minimized strain than mothers with less income (Harding et al, 2015). Parental encountering a low-income

huddle may command fewer tangible resources to contribute in their children (Duncan et al, 2017) and less likely to involve themselves in interactions which concern their infants such as reading, singing, storytelling or going on trips with them which can lead to developmental delays (Shah et al, 2015).

Kids living in impoverished backgrounds have a higher chance to have lower test scores than those from wealthier families, and they are at higher risk of dropping out of school. Children growing up in poor set ups cover fewer years of schooling thereafter earning lower income compared to those who grow up in well off set ups. Poverty cuts short a child's school preparedness since it results to retarded physical state of health and motor skills, reduces a child's ability to sustain focus in class and recall learning details as well as diminishing the child's attentiveness, curiosity and motivation (Emily Pressler,2016).

Mothers' income is a key factor that can neither be ignored nor separated from child' nutrition. Nutrition status greatly influences general child's health outcomes. Globally, mortality estimates reveal that almost half of all deaths among children under age 5 emanate from malnutrition [3]. Under nutrition spikes high the frequency and severity of infections, slows down recovery and death risks from such infections. Isack Kisiangani, (2014) opined that in childhood, malnutrition results to stunted growth, poor development, incapacitated ability for effective cognitive functionality resulting to poor academic performance and reduced word productivity in adulthood. All these negative factors are prevalent in mothers whose socio-engagement groups are low and they abhor proper school participation of their pre- school children.

2.2 Mothers' Level of Education and School Participation

There is a remarkable correlation between the parents' level of educational attainments and their kids. Maternal education is so key to early sensitization that improves their school participation (Banerji R., 2017 and Stephen Krashen, 2021). Educated mothers are capable of promoting their children for school readiness through talking and reading simple stories to them. This enables the children to start acquiring and building literacy capacity (Nicholas, Maria, Paatsch, Louise- Journal of Early childhood literacy, 2021).

Quality schooling is determined by period of time in terms of years of a mother's life spent in school and shows the quality of exposure to knowledge, skills values and schools besides the individual's ability to be persistent in pursuing good education and to various levels of completion. If a mother has children, the focus surpasses their own life experiences and opportunities to tackle their children's both immediate and future experiences (Harding et al, 2015). Mothers with greater levels of education are more likely to spend a bigger portion of their time in progressive appropriate interactions such as play and games in comparison with mothers who have inferior levels of education (Kalil et al. 2012).

Additionally, increased level of education can enhance parent's awareness of how to look for valuable experiences and opportunities and promote access to better and higher paying jobs (Harding et al, 2015). Once their children begin schooling, educated mothers are also more likely to pay attention, be more positively relational with their children's teachers besides ensuring that their kids are adequately and effectively supported. By taking part in parent-teacher meetings and volunteering at school, they encourage staff to be involved in their children's individuals needs and this really motivates their pre-school children to participate in various school activities that enhance learning.

2.3 Mothers' Attitude and School Participation

Parental educational attitude and behavior is of paramount importance in enhancing children's school participation. Various elements of mother's educational attitude and behaviors such as availing intellectually stimulating home environment. Parental view for the educational value in children's actions and parental conviction and ambitions have been pointed out to have a great positive impact on children's levels of educational accomplishments. Oundo, E.N et al (2014) in their study opined that positive parental attitude towards school participation enhances the same in their children.

The longitudinal study carried out by Dewitt et al. (2013) shows that children who had parents that possessed more health and constructive perspectives towards science managed to exhibit superior academic and occupational science craving, and thus highly intrinsically motivated to look for more scientific experiences. Breiner

(2016) emphasizes on the relationship between parental attitudes towards science and their children's science attainment and concluded that more positive attitude towards science influences their children's science achievements by improving the children's attitudes towards science and parental involvement in science – related activities.

A 2016 survey investigation stipulated by the Korean Ministry of education projected the yearly worth of the English Education market for preschoolers to be 250 billion (Ministry of education, 2016). Mothers had a positive attitude towards English for their pre- school children and opted for English learning at home and enthusiastically supported their children with acquiring English through the English Media avenues such as CDs, Videos and digital pens (choir et al ,2020: Kang et al 2019).

2.4 The Concept of Early Years Education

The first years of a child act as a very key foundation for the total life of an individual and thus very important. Niklas and Schneider Liebeskind (2013); Piotrowskir Lapiere and Linebarger (2014) in their study concluded that the experiences that children acquire in their early years keep influencing the child throughout his life. It is a very paramount duty of mothers and other children caregivers not to inhibit but rather to enhance the child's realization of holistic development through stimulating the child from conception. The early years are the fastest periods of growth and development in all domains. During this period, there is rapid growth and development which is very reflective in adult life of the children hence the critical need to provide healthy parent-child interactions (Mollers and Schneider, 2013; Nicklas, 2015). The significance of interactions in the initial eight months of early childhood has attracted concern in many disciplines as more studies on little children are being carried out. (Bigelow & Power, 2016; Mirreaut et al., 2014) Gladstone and Chichalok, (2018) reveal that good nutrition, proper care, love, nature, support and stimulation are very crucial in order to realize this rapid growth. Most "windows of opportunities" are open during this very vital period (Corinne Meier).

2.4.1 The window of vocabulary

The best person to use this window of opportunity maximumly is the first caregiver who in most cases is the mother since she has the baby right from the womb. Children's language

and literacy competences do not start when kids start schooling, but rather before. Studies reveal that children are sensitive to speech even before birth (Moon, Lagercrants & Kuhil, 2013; Parntane et al., 2013). [4] (Tamis-Lemonda, Baumwell, & Christ, 2012) all argue that children who are talked to in their early years acquire verbal communication faster and easier than children who are not talked to [5] and [6].

2.4.2 The window of Mathematics

This is the area of problem solving activities such as giving a child a picture to tell a story and news telling among others. The brain is very malleable hence; positive influences and experiences have the greatest impact (Cantor, 2019). Children's carers, therefore have a duty to provide health experiences so that children's brain can fully develop. The young children build their capacity to acquire basic mathematics skills by integrating its concepts into their daily life experiences (Harris, 2017; DJ Purpura, 2019). Mathematics is a science of logic-mathematics (Kamii, 2014/2016). Therefore, the children are perceived to be incapacitated by some activities. Such activities enforce them to think and reason out in order to resolve the tasks via physical activities in which greater reasoning is required [7]. Therefore, when children are taken through these intellectual challenges, they eventually secure an immense and firm mathematical and logical thinking (Kirkland, Manning, Osaki, Hicks, White bread and Coltman, 2015). Generally, it is believed that child's Play is the greatest effective approach for the young beginners as well as in learning mathematics (Tucker, 2013).

2.4.3 The window of motor skills

Development of motor skills within the first five years is very crucial. Children move about performing different activities (Sutapa, 2021). The children caregivers therefore ought to provide a safe environment that children can move about as well as age appropriate activities that can enhance the children's motor skills development. The component of developing fine motor skills is so vital since it can help stimulate the children's inborn potentials in the academic areas (Chin-Kai, 2014) & [8] 3 year old children show the capability to grip items using their thumb and fore finger, at age 4 the fine motoric in the children has advanced into such as constructing high towers using brick toys, the 5years old kid's motor skills ought to command

further advancement to a vastness of fingers, arms and advanced eye-hand coordination, and at 6, children are capable of doing the fastening of shoelaces, and dressing up (Adolph, 2017).

During early years, fine motor skills can be developed in children through engaging them in hand manipulating of various objects such as arranging beans, leafing through pages of books, cutting with scissors, producing forms using folding paper, playing dough, coloring and weaving ropes [9,10] (Xia, 2016). Additionally, children via activities such as writing and drawing can achieve fine motor skills with pencils and crayons (Punum et al. 2015). Thus it's very necessary for preschool teachers and other caregivers to appreciate the children's fine motor skills development the earliest possible in order to support them to fully and effectively develop in the same.

2.4.4 The window of social relationships and emotional control

On health attachment, early years form a very crucial period that the mother can enhance love and trust (Mirinas, 2019). The period forms the foundation for future social relationships of children as well as social behavior [11]. The children develop the ability to eat, play and carry out some activities together with others (Anne-Geth, Elly & Anne Loes, 2013). It is during this critical window stage that a mother who is educated and knowledgeable will be able to instill social skills to their children Tamusa Lemonda C, Baumwell L, Christofaro T. Parent child conversation during play; 2012. It is also at this foundational period that care givers can support their children to develop emotional control. Nelson et al. [12] states that window of emotional control enables the children to develop self-esteem, social behavior and self-identification such a "who am I" as well as making exploration of their bodies.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

This study shall glean from Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs in an attempt to explain that human beings have innate weak instincts that eventually get to be specific needs. If these needs are not met then they normally influence the individual's disposition, thus influencing their motivation. The theorist also agreed that some needs are more powerful than others that is to say some needs have to be satisfied before

others. He held that a person does not feel the upper need in the pyramid until the lower need has been satisfied. He further argued that biological needs: that is the need for food, water, air; clothing and shelter are the critical. Safety needs, need for love and affection, self-esteem and self-actualization in that order come after. He therefore devised what is known as:

Maslow's hierarchy of needs which owns these five classifications of needs that can be illustrated using the pyramid in Fig. 1.

Physiological needs are very vital for human being's survival. Maslow opined that, lower needs in the pyramid must be met before the upper needs in the pyramid are met; for instance, it would be extremely challenging for or child to maintain focus in class when he is hungry. He will be very weak and troubled until he gets food to eat. Then after the hunger needs are met, the child is able now to place the demand of love and affection at hand, from healthy relations, and use all other aspects of his life to participate actively in school in order to acquire knowledge that leads to acquire knowledge that leads the child to self-actualization.

Mothers whose status in socio – economic engagement is low suffer a lot of economic and social constraints and thus limited in so many ways thus not able to provide basic and affection needs which are so significant in enhancing pre-school children school participation that leads the children to become fully baked and fulfilled members of the society. Mothers in low SEE group are employed in informal jobs which in turn earns them peanuts that cannot enable them to cater even for physiological needs of their children let alone the other upper needs in Maslow's Hierarchy of needs pyramid. For instance, a hungry child cannot concentrate in class for better learning and a child in tutored clothes feels very much humiliated by that condition and therefore most of the time that child will be withdrawn from the others not only during class activities but also when having co-curriculum activities. This implies that various domains of that child's growth and development such as physical and social will be adversely affected.

2.6 Conceptual Framework

The new CBC points out that the major yardstick used to measure educational output is how well children will be able to exhibit various

Competences both in school and in life after school. This output, however will be realized after the varying inputs into the learning process undergo what is referred to as the education and working method. The inputs in this educational process include the children, the teachers and educational resources such as books, facilities etc. and most importantly the ability of the parents to offer wholesome and consistent support to their children and therefore enhancing positive participation in the learning process. This participation entails exhibiting developmental progress in all domains in the lives of the children such as Cognitive domain, Physical domain, Social, Emotional, Language, and Spiritual aspects.

From the interaction with many children, high observation has it that, mothers in this county take a bigger role, almost the entire role in bringing up their children. Most of these mothers are less or not educated and thus do not have the capacity to be employed in well-paying jobs. The socio-economic engagement of these mothers in such low paying jobs and employment leads to low social economic status.

SES entails not just earnings but also sophistication, financial protection and subjective perceptions of socioeconomic standing, standard of life, attributes as well as the chances and privileges afforded to people within society. Poverty distinctly is not a single element but rather is characterized by many physical and psychological nuisances. More so, SES is a dependable and constant predictor of a wide range of outcomes across the lifetime including physical and psychological health. SES is not only pertinent to education but also to the behavioral and proper functioning of the child (Houle, 2014). SES is a major factor that influences even how parents are willing and able to involve themselves in the children educational process.

The researcher feels that low SES is a result of low SEE group and has so many adverse effects not only to education of the pre-school children but also their life as a whole. Low SEE group households have very little or no income or wealth and thus limited in so many ways. They are also faced with severe challenges in meeting their needs for example such families could be going without enough and proper nutrition, living in semi-permanent houses, some even without safe doors and windows resulting to suffering from effects of hash weather conditions such as rain and cold especially at night. In such homes,

children are the ones who suffer most since they are still at vulnerable age. This adversely interferes with their ability and the process of becoming self-actualized and self-fulfilled people as indicated above in the Maslow's Hierarchy of needs. This has an implication that these lower needs in the pyramid (physiological needs) are very vital towards keeping children in good health that enables them to participate well in learning. This nevertheless is not the case in Kilifi County

because many pre-school children are brought up by mothers in lower SEE groups not being financially capacitated to provide the physiological needs. Malnutrition goes hand in hand with deficiency diseases and it's also very common to them since they don't get enough and balanced diet that ought to enhance good growth and development to the children (Aikens & Barbarian, 2008; Bergen, Bishop & Jong, 2016).

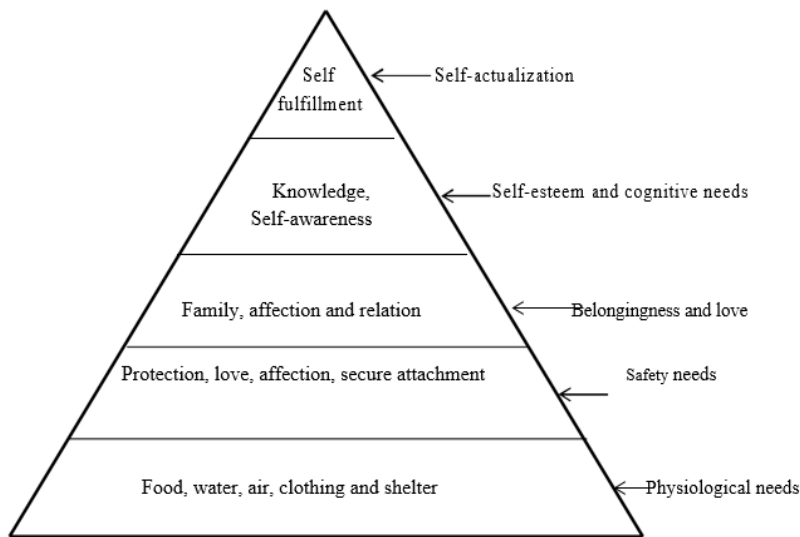


Fig. 1. Maslow's hierarchy of needs

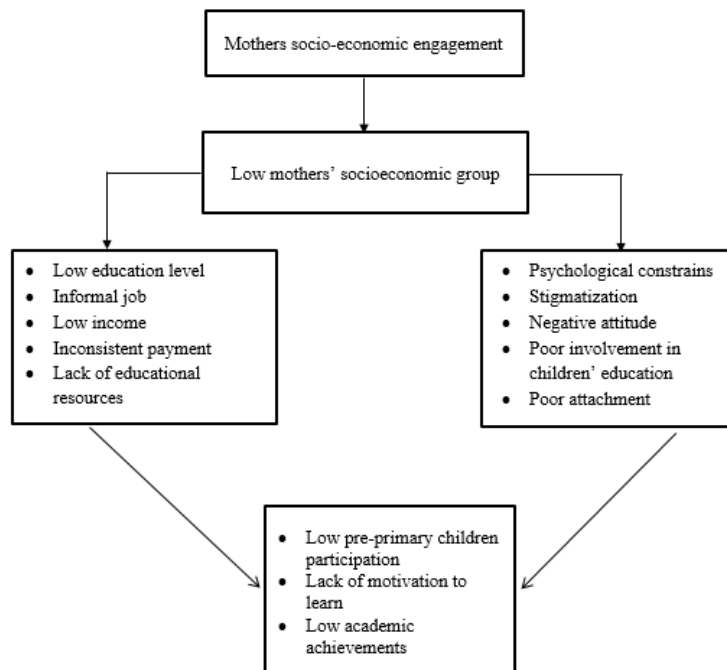


Fig. 2. The conceptual framework diagram

Accessing quality education too is almost impossible to such families. The parents cannot afford to cater for their children's educational needs such as resources, providing an intellectual stimulating environment, paying for their educational trips or even taking them to good schools. Such children, due to the low SEE group of their mothers with such poor remuneration, cannot be capacitated and motivated to actively take part in their children's education, thus low school participation.

2.7 Recap of literature Review

The work has analyzed the elements that influence pre-primary school children's school participation such as mother's occupation and level of income, mother's level of education, mother's attitude towards school participation and importance of investing in early years for better school participation of pre-school children.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The research assumed a descriptive research design. Descriptive survey is an approach of gathering facts by interviewing or administering a questionnaire to a sample of individuals (Orodho 2009). The key advantage of using this design is that it allowed for an in depth look into the content and it was befitting when collecting and describing information concerning people's opinions, and viewpoints of educational or social affairs and concerns (Orodho & Kombo, 2002). Both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed in the study. Qualitative data was accessed through the way of questionnaires. Descriptive survey design also capacitated the researcher to establish how the dependent variable was being influenced by the independent variable.

3.2 Study Locale

Kilifi County incorporates of seven sub-counties namely: Kilifi north, Kilifi south, Malindi, Magarini, Rabai, Ganze and Kaloleni Sub County. The study was conducted in Kilifi south sub county because the researcher has worked in that locale for quite a long time and thus has witnessed this great concern of low school participation in learning of the pre-school children. Kilifi south sub county comprises of three clusters and they are Mtwapa cluster, Junju and Mkwajuni cluster

with a total of 39 government primary schools, under which there are pre-school units running. The researcher used purposive sampling to choose Kilifi Sub County owing to the fact that schools in this Sub County are located near each other, which enabled the researchers to access them easily.

3.3 Target Population

The study targeted pre-school teachers, mothers in various SEE and pre-school children in Kilifi south sub-county.

3.4 Sampling Technique and Sample Size

A sample size between 10% and 30% is statistically significant for any given investigation (Mugenda, 2003). Thus 6 out of a population of 39 schools, 195 out of 1950 children, 23 out of 117 pre-school teachers and a sample size of 11 out of 36 mothers' representatives was anticipated to take part in the study. This made the total number of respondents to be 229 out of 2,103.

Children were involved in the study because they are the ones being directly influenced by their mothers' socioeconomic engagement. The mothers were rich informants in the study because they are the key subject of concern since their socioeconomic engagement directly impacts children's school participation. The researcher worked closely with the head teacher to help her identify the mothers who were resourceful in the study.

Simple random sampling is the technique that the researcher employed in this study. This was because the technique gave a chance to every member of population to be selected without biasness let alone being simple to use (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). The population and sample size of children, pre-school teachers and mothers' representatives who were involved in the study as well as the used sample size and the sampling technique was summarized in the Table 1.

3.5 Research Instruments

Questionnaires alongside, interview schedules and observation schedules were used to access the study's data. Questionnaires were used to gather information from teachers, interview schedules for the mothers while observation schedules were used to gather information from the young children.

Table 1. Summary of the sample size and sampling techniques

Respondents	Population size	Sample size	Percentage	Sampling Technique
Children	1950	195	10	Simple random
Teachers	117	23	20	Simple random
Mothers' representatives	36	11	30	Simple random
Total	2103	229	60	

3.5.1 Instruments' validity

Instruments' validity was ensured via conducting pilot testing to disclose any weakness in the design. It drew subjects from the target population. Pretesting relied on colleagues and actual respondents in one of the schools in Kilifi South sub-county.

Opinions and clarifications were taken in to improve the instruments. The instruments were then piloted in one of the schools in Kilifi south sub-county. Adjustments were made to contents in the instruments to ensure that they were in agreement with the objectives of the study.

3.5.2 Reliability of instrument

Random errors emanate from ambiguous questionnaires, vague instructions to the respondents or lack of proper attention during interviews and observation. The researcher minimized the random errors by issuing clear instructions to the respondents and double inspecting the questionnaires in the piloting process. The research employed test-re-test technique to affirm reliability of the research instruments. The questionnaires were administrated twofold by the scholar to the same group of respondents after a two weeks lapse time to check whether the same results were obtained and thus the consistence of the research instrument. Donnie and Health (1965) put it that the longer period of time the researcher takes after administering the first test and the time he/she will administer the second test, the lower the correlation in responses and therefore the researcher used this concept to administer the two tests.

3.6 Data Collection Procedures

Consent to conduct the research in various schools was sought from the Center managers/ Head teachers and the heads of the pre-school units in the concerned schools. The researcher worked closely with the head teacher to help her identify mothers who were resourceful in the study. The researcher also personally distributed

the questionnaires to the teachers. The researcher via PTA took advantage of parents' meetings in some of the selected schools to interview mothers. In the case that some mothers were not easily available in the parents' meetings due to the nature of their jobs, the researcher obtained their contacts through the office of the Head teacher and planed with them when and where to meet them for the interview. The researcher also spent time in some nursery schools making kin observations of the children's behavior and how they participated in various activities both in the classroom set up and outside the classroom. The observation that were made was then recorded in the observation schedule.

Official paper is an approach of data collection from documented sources. The researcher moreover used this method to collect information that could not be secured via interviews. Official documents as well as policy documents of the selected schools were used to avail information. Documents analysis was beneficial when collecting data since the documents are detailed, complete and structured. Readily availability and saving on time were also added advantages of using the documents. Such used records included teacher records, class attendance registers and assessment records for young children.

3.7 Data Analysis Techniques

The statistics convened in this examination was compiled and confirmed for intactness and then analyzed through descriptive statistics and presented by way of tables and figures. Pearson correlations was used to determine the relatedness of the variables besides enhancing drawing conclusions. Descriptive statistical techniques (Percentages and frequencies) was employed to interpret field data from questionnaires to help in data interpretation.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), stipulate that ethical considerations are every core for any

research. Majority of ethical issues in any study are categorized in four groups including informed consent, safeguard from any detriment, right to privacy and honesty with professional colleagues (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005). Throughout the study the researcher highly embraced all these ethical guidelines in conducting the research to the very end to see to it that ethical rights and values were not violated. The scholar applied for research license from National Council for science and technology and innovations (NACOSTI) via the school of Education; Mount Kenya University before proceeding to the field for data gathering. Upon being granted the research permit, the researcher sought further permission from the Sub-County Director of Education to conduct the research in his jurisdiction area.

The researcher through the Head teachers further sought parents' permission to involve their children in the study. Additionally, the researcher not only established a good rapport with the respondents by being honest and respectful, but also ensured that the purpose of the study and its potential benefits were clearly explained to all the participants. Voluntary participation was a key factor in this study. Further, assurance that the study is purely for academic purposes was given to the respondents. The study also did not demand to acquire the identities of the respondents as a requirement or condition to take part in research thus it was conducted on condition of anonymity. The questionnaires clearly indicated this disclaimer. Finally, the researcher remained objective and saw to it that findings, conclusions and recommendations were purely data based.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Questionnaires Return rate

A total of 229 respondents with 195 of them being pre-school children, 23 being pre-school teachers and 11 mothers participated in the study. The results of questionnaires return rate are presented in the Table 2.

Table 2. Questionnaires return rate

Respondents	Returned	Not returned
Teachers	23 (100%)	0 (0%)
Total	23 (100%)	0 (0%)

The Table 2 shows that all the questionnaires were returned by the teachers in the study. This indicated that data was gathered from all the

intended sample of pre-teachers therefore was a good representation as proposed by the researcher. The researcher made a follow up distributed questionnaires so as to ensure that they were all returned.

4.2 Background Characteristics of the Respondents

4.2.1 Distribution of teachers by gender

The gender of sampled teachers was obtained and presented as recorded in the Table 3.

Table 3. Distribution of teachers by gender

Respondents	Male	Female
Teachers	9 (39%)	14 (61%)
Total	9 (39%)	14(61%)

From the Table 3, it is evident that majority of the questioned pre-school teachers that is 61% were female while 39% were male teachers. The outcomes implied that most preschool teachers in the study are women with men being fewer in general.

4.2.2 Distribution of teachers by age

Data on the distribution of teachers by age is shown in the Table 4.

Table 4. Distribution of teachers by age

Age in years	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Below 20	0	0.0
21-30	15	65
31-40	8	35
41-50	0	0.0
51-60	0	0.0
Above 60	0	0.0
Total	23	100

The Table 4 reveals that majority of the pre-school teachers who participated in the study i.e. (65%) were between 21-30 years of age and 35% were aged between 31-40 years. These outcomes implied that the ages of preschool teachers in the study area ranged from 21-40 years with most preschool teachers being aged between 21-30 years.

4.2.3 Teachers professional qualification

Data on the professional qualification of teachers who took part in this study is presented in the Table 5.

Table 5. Teachers professional qualification

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Doctorate	0	0.0
Master's degree	0	0.0
Bachelor's degree	4	17
Diploma	16	70
Certificate	3	13
Total	23	100

Table 5 stipulates that majority (70 %) of the pre-school teachers had Diploma, 17% had bachelor's degree and 13% were certificate holders. Nevertheless no teacher had Doctorate, master's degree and certificate. The study therefore implied that within pre-schools in Kilifi south sub-county, most preschool teachers have no degrees or any postgraduate degree as most of them have diploma level qualification and below. The low level professional qualification of preschool teachers has been supported by other scholars. For instance, an earlier study by Anyango (1996) revealed that in Nairobi County, preschool teachers were mainly KCPE certificate holders indicating low levels of education among these teachers a situation that hasn't changed much as the current study shows that very few has undergraduate degree level of education and none having postgraduate degree.

4.2.4 Arrangement of mothers agedness

The age bracket of sampled mothers was obtained and presented as indicated in Table 6.

The Table 6 communicates that majority of the pre-school children mothers' that is 55% were in the age bracket of 19-30 years while 18% of them were below the age 18 years. Another 18% and 9% of them were in the age bracket of 41-50 and 51-60 years respectively. Therefore, the results implied that most mothers of preschool children in Kilifi south sub-county were aged between 19 and 30 and therefore majority of preschool learners had youthful mothers.

Table 6. Distribution of mothers by age

Age bracket in years	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Below 18	2	18
19-30	6	55
31-40	2	18
41-50	1	9
51-60	0	0
Total	11	100

4.2.5 Children academic performance in terms of levels of expectation in Kilifi South Sub-county of Kilifi County

Teachers were required to give the overall mean level of expectation of their classes in the previous end term on 2022 examination. The following data was obtained as recorded in the Table 7.

The Table 7 indicates that majority of teachers i.e. (43%) stated their classes had mean grade of A.E in the previous end term examination. This is followed by 26% of teachers who stated that their classes had mean grade of B.E. 18% of teachers stated that their classes had mean grade of M.E and finally 13percent of teachers stated that their classes had a mean grade of E.E. The results therefore implied that within preschools in Kilifi south sub-county, academic performance of preschool learners was almost average as it was established that most of them had performance that approached expectations. In an earlier study, results of an investigation conducted by Mosansa [13] established that 80% of preschool learners scored 59% and below in examination an indication of underperformance which echoes the present study outcomes.

4.3 Mothers Occupation and Level of Income and Children's Participation

The foremost objective of this study was to determine the influence of mothers' occupation and level of income on children's school

Table 7. Children's academic performance

Mean grade	Frequency	Percentage (%)
E.E75 marks and above	3	13%
Meeting Expectation(M.E) 50 marks and above	4	18%
Approaching Expectation(A.E) Below 50 mark	10	43%
Below Expectation (B.E) 25 mark and below	6	26%
Total	23	100%

(Source Field data 2022)

participation on pre-school units under public elementary school in Kilifi South of Kilifi County. In order to realize this objective 23 teachers were required to state the approximate level of their pupils mothers income and their corresponding academic performance (Mean grade) in the previous end term one 2022 examination . Cross tabulation was done and the data is presented in the Table 8.

According to Kenya National Bureau of statistics (2015) households in lower occupational groups earn lower finances and live on monthly income of less than Kshs 23 670, middle occupational group is the middle class and they live on monthly income of 199999 while upper occupational group/ the upper class/ high income households spend a monthly income of above Kshs 200,000.

The New Competence Based Curriculum uses the following grading scale in all elementary schools in the County.

Exceeding Expectation (E.E) = Above 75 marks= Very Good.

Meeting Expectation (M.E) =50-74 marks= Good.

Approaching Expectation (A.E) =25-49 marks= weak

Below Expectation (B.E) =1-24 mark= Poor

From the Table 8, it is evident that majority of children i.e 88 (45%) attained a grade of Approaching Expectation (A.E) which is equivalent to 25-49 marks and these are children who come from very low socio-economic/occupational group mothers with monthly income of between Kshs 5000-1000. 57 (29%) of the pupils attained the lowest grade of Below Expectation (B.E) which is equivalent to 1-24 marks and these come from households where mothers' monthly income is between Kshs 11000-20000. 35 (18%) of the pupils attained a grade of meeting expectation (M.E) which is equivalent to 50-74 marks and these came from households where mothers' income per month is between Kshs 21000-30000. The last category of children, 15(15%) pupils, managed to attain a grade of exceeding expectation (E.E) which is equivalent to 75-100 marks and these are the children/pupils who come from households whose occupational/socio-economic group is said by both teachers and the mothers to be high with mothers' income being Kshs 31000 and above.

The first two groups of children have their mothers earning very little monthly income of 5000-10000 and 11000-20000 respectively. This

can be in the majority of their children's low school participation leading to their performance being weak or poor i.e. Approaching Expectation (A.E) /25-49 mark and Below Expectation (B.E) /1-24 marks. This can be attributed to their mother's financial inability to provide for their children's academic requirements such as learning resources and a good cognitive stimulating environment at home.

The last two groups of children are very few and those that have their mothers earning quite high monthly income of Kshs. 21000 – 30000 and over 30000 respectively. This can be reflected in the children's high school participation leading to high academic performance of Meeting Expectations (M.E) of 50-74 marks and Exceeding Expectation (E.E) of 75-100 marks. This can also be attributed to their mothers' financial ability to cater for their children's educational necessities such as learning resources and availing of conducive learning environment at home that stimulates the developments of all child's domains. Therefore, the results implied that preschool learners with high income earning parents have grades exceeding excellent in their academic but are few whereas those with low income earning parents have approaching expectation grades and are the majority in the study area. This established relationship is in line with results of a study by Alexander (2012) that found that pupils with parents working in professional occupation mostly have better academic performance than those whose parents are not working in professional fields as the former parents were found to be able to provide teaching and learning materials their children needed. However, unlike the present study which focused on only mothers' occupation, Alexander (2012) looked at occupation of both mothers and fathers.

Mothers were also asked to give their opinions on the influence of their occupation and income level of children's school participation. Their feedback are presented as shown in the Table 9.

According to the Table 9, a bigger number of the mothers (55%) strongly agreed with the fact that high income emanating from working in a high occupational group capacitates mothers to avail their kids with educational demands thus positively affecting their school participation, 18% of the mothers stated that children who come from households where mothers are poor do not get good opportunity to bond with their mothers which affects their school participation negatively

and 27% of the mothers stated that in Kilifi South sub-county a lot of mothers struggle financially to offer their children's with educational requirements which affects their school participation negatively. The findings implied that preschool children with high income earning mothers participated in school more than those with low income earning mothers. In Tanzania, it was established by Onzima (2011) that inability of parents to enroll learners to school was due to financial difficulties or low income which agrees with the present study outcomes.

4.4 Mothers level of Education and Children's School Participation

The second objective was to find out the stretch to which mothers level of education influences children school participation in learning in the Kilifi South Sub-county. . So as to achieve this objective, teachers were required to state their children's mean grades on their previous end of term one 2022 examination. Cross tabulation was done and the data presented in the Table 10.

From Table 10, it is indicated that high levels of mothers' education results to high school participation leading to attainments of high academic performance for their children. This was showed through the results that indicated that most children who got M.E. and E.E had mothers with secondary level of education (43.6% and 14.6%) and college /university level of education (37.5% and 18.8%).This can be attributed to the reason that the more the mothers are educated the higher the chances that they treasure the value of education and thus can enhance their children's school participation by supporting them in the learning process.

Highly educated mothers are able to offer quality educational assistance to their children at home through helping them with homework and setting a home environment conducive for learning. These outcomes concur with the findings of Mallan (2009) and Rana [14] that the parents level of education influences children academic performance .However from the table too, the researcher realized that most children who attained B.Es and A.E s had mothers with the primary level of education of (16% and 62.1%).

This can be attributed to the explanation that lower levels of education do not offer sufficient illumination and awareness of the importance and value of education and thus cannot consequently extend the same to their children. The low levels of education incapacitates the mothers from supporting their children in education through offering a hand with home assignments and setting a home environment which is conducive for learning leading to low school participation.

Results in Table 11 shows that majority of the teachers (51%) firmly agreed with the issued assertions on mothers' level of education and children's school participation .43% agreed, 6% were undecided, none of the teachers disagreed with the assertions. This implies that most of the teachers (51%) firmly agreed that mother's level of education influences children's school participation in learning. Similarly, Joan and Smreker (2009) in her study stressed the strong relationship between parental education levels and learners' school participation as she argued that high education levels of parents may improve their ability to become engaged in their children's education ensuring the children's school participation and eventual academic success.

4.5 Mothers Attitude towards Education and Children's School Participation

The third objective was to determine how mothers' attitude towards education influences children's school participation in learning in pre-school units under public elementary school found in the Kilifi South Sub-county. Teachers were required to state their children's mothers' attitude towards education and their children's mean grades in their previous end of term examination. Cross tabulation was done and the data presented in the Table 12.

From Table 12, it is indicated mother's attitude towards education determines children's school participation and thus performance. This was showed through the results that indicated that most children who attained A.E's and B.E's belonged to mother's who had attitude towards education that was poor (64.7% and 14.7%) and very poor 61.1% and 25.0%).

Table 8. Cross tabulation of mothers occupation and level of income and children's school participation

Mother's income in Kshs	Children's academic performance				Total	
	E.E	M.E	A.E	B.E	Pupils	0%
5000-10000	0	0	88	0	88	45
11000-20000	0	0	0	57	57	29
21000-30000	0	35	0	0	35	18
Over 31000	15	0	0	0	15	8
Total	15	35	88	57	195	100%

Table 9. Mothers opinions on how their occupation and income level influences children's school participation

Mothers opinions	Total mothers	%
High occupational group leads to earning high income and this empowers one to best cater for their children's educational needs.	6	55%
Children whose mothers are in low occupational group i.e. Informal or odd jobs suffer lack of good attachment and nurturance from their mothers spend a lot of time in work due to the nature of their work, such as that of being house helps.	2	18%
Many mothers in the sub-county strain financially to provide for their children's educational requirements.	3	27%
Total	11	100%

Table 10. Mothers level of education and children's school participation

Mother's level of education		Children's academic performance				Total
		E.E	M.E	A.E	B.E	0%
Uneducated	Count	10	22	3	2	37
	Within %	27	59.5	8.1	5.4	100.0
Primary level of education	Count	14	54	15	4	87
	Within %	16.1	62.1	17.2	4.6	100.0
Secondary level of education	Count	4	19	24	8	55
	Within %	7.3	34.5	43.6	14.6	100.0
College /University level of education	Count	3	4	6	3	16
	Within %	18.8	25.0	37.0	18.8	100.0
Total	Count	31	99	48	17	195
	Within %	15.9	50.8	24.6	8.7	100.0

Table 11. Teachers responses on mothers level of education and school participation

	5 FA	4 A	3 U	2 D	1 FD	Total
Highly educated mothers are more involved in their children's education than lowly /uneducated mothers thus enhancing their children school participation in learning	14(61%)	6(26%)	3(13%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	23/100%
Mothers with higher level of education are more capable of availing a more conclusive learning environment at home for their children than those with lower levels of education /uneducated.	11(48%)	11(48%)	1(4%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	23/100%
Highly educated mothers understand the importance of early years and thus take advantage of the same for early stimulation	10(43%)	13(57%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	23/100%
Mean Responses	12 (51%)	10 (43%)	1 (6%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	23/100%

Table 12 Mothers attitude towards education and children’s school participation

Mother’s attitude towards education		Children’s academic performance				Total
		E.E (1-24) (marks)	A.E (25-49) (marks)	M.E (50-75) (marks)	E.E (75-100) (marks)	
Very poor	Count	22	9	3	2	36
	% within	61.1%	25.0%	8.3%	5.6%	100.0%
Poor	Count	10	44	11	3	68
	% within	14.7%	64.7%	16.2%	4.4%	100.0%
Fair	Count	6	14	8	4	32
	% within	18.7%	43.8 %	25%	12.5%	100.0%
Good	Count	3	15	20	5	43
	% within	7.0%	34.9%	46.5%	11.6%	100.0%
Very Good	Count	2	3	7	4	16
	% within	12.5%	18.7%	43.8%	25.0%	100.0%
Total	Count	30	98	49	18	195
	% Within	15.4%	50.3%	25.1%	9.2%	100.0%

A positive note on performance from that table was taken that most children who attained M.E and E.E belonged to mothers who had attitude towards education that was good (46.5%- 11.6% and very good (43.8%-25.0%). However the children whose mothers attitude was fair towards education were 18.7% who got B.E. 43.8% got A.E, 25% M.E and 12.5 % E.E. This can be attributed to the explanation that the more positive attitude the mothers have the higher the chances that they positively influence their children to be active participants of various learning activities and vice versa. A study by Rojalin [15] on its part revealed that the overallly, Indian parents’ attitude towards their children’s education was moderately favorable and positive towards schooling and education of their children. However, they did not show how such attitudes affected school performance or attendance as the present study has shown.

Teachers were also asked to give their opinions on the mother’s attitude towards education and school participation. Thus they were necessitated to fill a 5-likert scale with firmly agree (FA)=5 Agree (A)=4 undecided (U)=3, Disagree (D)=2 and firmly disagree (FD)=1. Their opinions/ responses.

Outcome presented in Table 13 revealed that most teachers (70%) fully agreed that a mother’s attitude towards education positively correlates with their children’s school participation, 26% agreed and 4% were undecided. This implied that mothers’ attitude towards education in Kilifi

south sub-county generally correlated with their children’s school participation. The study also established that 61% of teachers fully agreed that mothers who were enthusiastic about their children’s learning process positively influenced them to be active participants of various learning activities. This implied that preschool learners’ active participation in various school activities was strongly related to mother’s enthusiasm about their children’s learning process. Therefore, mothers’ attitude towards education is strongly related to preschool learners’ participation in education within Kilifi south sub-county. These results are somewhat in line with those of Rojalin [16] which showed that parents’ attitude towards their children’s education was related to schooling and education of their children.

This researcher also wished to examine how mothers’ attitude towards education influenced school participation of children from the mothers themselves. In this regard, the researcher sought to establish the frequency at which mothers assist their children with homework at home. Mothers gave the following responses as presented in the Table 14.

From the Table 14 it is evident that majority (55%) of mothers never helped their children with homework at home while 18% and 18% of the mothers rarely and sometimes assisted their children in doing assignments at home respectively and finally 9% helped their children

very often. The outcomes therefore imply that most preschool learners' mothers do not support their children in doing their homework at home and this as are driving the low participation in school as earlier established. A study by Jiawen, Michael, Dajung and Eva [17] however proved that most (67-80%) American parents in the years 2017 to 2019 especially mothers had helped their preschool learners with their homework though this involvement was not positively related to their children's academic performance.

4.6 Early Years and School Participation

The fourth objective was to determine the rationale of early years and how they enhance children's school participation in learning in pre-school units under public elementary school found in Kilifi South Sub-County in Kilifi County. In relation to achieving this objective, a number of attributes on significance of the early years on school participation were measured. These include:

- a. Mother's ability to stimulate their children from conception through infancy stage.
- b. Developmental/positivemother-child interactions.

The variables are discussed in the section given below.

The first attribute measuring mothers' awareness of importance of early years was "mothers' ability

to stimulate their children from conception through infancy stage". The mothers were asked to indicate whether they normally stimulate their inborn through infancy stage by talking to them adequately and in a loving manner. The data is shown in the Fig. 3.

The Fig. 3. above indicates that majority (64%) of the mothers stated that they did not offer early stimulation to their children from conception through infancy stages of their children. 36% Stated that offered early stimulation to their children from conception through infancy stages of their children. This has an implication that majority of mothers were not aware of significance of early years. This is likely to affect children's school participation negatively. A study by Torquato, Collet, Forte, França, Silva and Reichert [18] established that mothers had the ability generally on child stimulation and development prior to and post conducted educational intervention. Therefore, before intervention, most mothers engaged in stimulating their children developmentally a situation that is in the contrary for the present study.

The second measure of mother's awareness of significance of early years was the ability of mothers to have healthy mother-child interactions. Thus mothers were asked to indicate the frequency at which they had developmental intentional interactions with their children such as playing and storytelling with them. The data is indicated in the Table given 15.

Table 13. Teachers responses on mother's attitude towards education and children's school participation

	5 FA	4 A	3 U	2 D	1 FD	Total
Mothers' attitude towards education positively correlates with their children's school participation	16(70%)	6(26%)	1(4%)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	23(100.0)
Mothers who are enthusiastic about their children's learning process positively influence them to be active participants of various learning activities	14(61%)	7(30%)	2(9%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	23(100%)
Mean Responses	15(65%)	6(26%)	2(9%)	0(0.0)	0(0.0%)	23(100%)

Table 14. Mother's assistance with homework

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Never	6	55%
Rarely	2	18%
Sometimes	2	18%
Often	1	9%
Total	11	100%

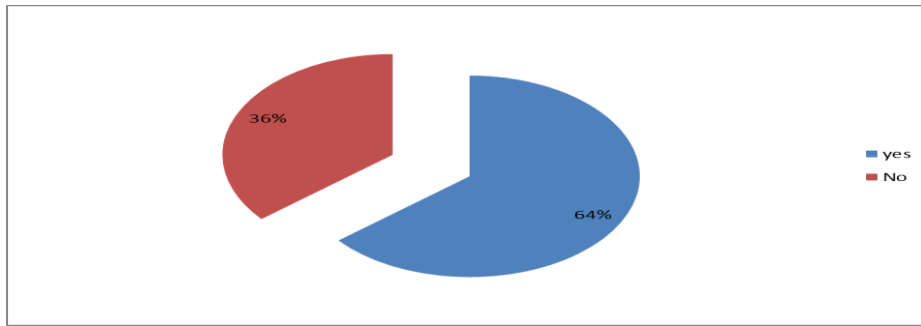


Fig. 3. Mothers ability to stimulate children during early years

Table 15. Developmental /positive mother-child interaction

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Never	7	64
Rarely	1	9
Sometimes	3	27
Often	0	0
Total	11	100

From the Table 15 it is evident that 64% of the mothers admitted that they never had any developmental interactions with their children. This has an implication that 64% of the mothers in the locale of study were ignorant of the significance of early years and how they can be utilized to enhance pre-school children's school participation. 9% of the mothers rarely had the mother-child interactions while 27% had the mother-child interactions sometimes. However, none of the mothers had the mother-child interactions with their children very often. A study by Naama, Kirby and Martha [19] also established that some mothers did not regularly have interactions with their children, however, for those who had mother-child interactions, they reacted to one another's signals during such interactions not only behaviorally but also physiologically.

From the mother's interviews schedule, the researcher sought to find out the mothers' occupation and the approximate time they spend in their occupation. Most mothers cited odd jobs such as poorly paid house help jobs, washing people's clothes for wages, buying and selling vegetables among others as their dominant occupation while a few said that they are self-employed in small scale business. One of the interviewed mothers who admitted that she was not employed had this to say "I am not employed to earn any reliable amount of income at the end of the month and therefore I do any job available to be paid some wages after the work. Most of

the time I go from house to house to ask if I can be given some house hold chores to do such as laundry work. This compels me to leave the house early in the morning and go back late therefore I have no time to fully get involved in neither proper attachment with my child nor get involved with his education at home. (Source: field data2022).

From the mother's interview scheduled, the researcher also sought to find out the approximate mothers' income level per month and whether it affected their enhancing children's school participation in learning. Most of the mothers admitted that their income level per month was too low and that adversely affected their capacity to enhance their children's school participation. One of the interviewed mothers had this to say "My daughter is often sent back home for lack of various school payments and other educational necessities like uniform, portfolios, revision books among others and when she comes back home she stays for even more than two or three weeks because my income level is too low to cater adequately for all her educational needs" (source: field data 2022).

Another mother said this "Since I did not receive quality education from my parents I have a burning desire to do the opposite to my children and be fully involved in their education but due to the fact that my income level is low I have to work throughout the day in order to sustain my family. This leaves me with very little time to get involved in my children's education" (source: field data 2022).

However, a few said that despite their low income level they try their level best to get involved in their children's education. They stated that they usually create a conducive home environment for their children's education at home and also work in collaboration with teachers to monitor the educational progress of their children [20].

The researcher sought to find out the mothers' educational status and whether it influenced their children's school participation. Mothers unanimously admitted that they have low level of education and some maintained that their low levels of education frustrates their ability to get involved in their children's education such as helping them with their homework at home thus adversely affecting their school participation in relation to mothers educational level.

One mother had this to say. "I am uneducated and my educational status greatly has a negative impact on my ability to engage myself in my children's education, am unable to and effectively monitor my son's educational progress, am unable to assist my little son with homework at home and also am unable to effectively participate in PTA meetings due to language barrier" source: Field data 2022).

From the mother's interview schedule, the researcher also sought to determine mother's attitude towards education and how it affected their ability to promote their children's school participation in learning. Most of the mothers agreed that due to hardships of life, their attitude towards education and its high demands was not positive and thus their children's school participation was adversely affected. One of the interviewed mothers had this to say. "I am not enthusiastic or motivated enough to neither support my son in doing his homework at home nor avail a conducive learning environment at

home because of what I go through in life making ends meet.

From the observation schedule, the researcher took quality time to interact with the children during their various learning activities, made kin observation on how they carried out the activities and took note of the outcome of their ability to carry out the activities. The observations made were indicated in the Table 16.

From the observation schedule Table 16, it is evident that most of the pre-school kids could not carry out the various learning activities well. These are the categories of children that attained Below Expectation (B.E) and Approaching Expectation (A.E) respectively. This is largely a resultant effect of the many explanations cited by mothers that were responsible for not enhancing school participation in learning for their children. Such explanations are like low income and education levels.

5. SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between mothers' socio-economic engagement and pre-primary school Children's school participation in learning, in pre- school units under public elementary schools found in Kilifi South Sub-county of Kilifi County, Kenya. Data was gathered via questionnaires, interview schedules and observation schedules. Teachers filled the questionnaires, mothers were engaged

Table 16. Children's observation schedule

Activity Area	B.E (1-24 marks)	A.E (25-49 marks)	M.E (50- 74)marks	E.E (74-100 marks)	Total
Mathematics Activities Qn. Join dots of the numbers given below 1-10	54(28%)	68(35%)	40(20%)	33(17%)	195(100%)
English Activities Oral questions					
a. What is your name?	60(31%)	62(32%)	44(22%)	29(15%)	195(100%)
b. How old are you?	56(29%)	66(34%)	34(17%)	39(20%)	195(100%)
Integrated Activities 1. Hygiene and Nutrition activities Task : wash your hands clean	50(26%)	72(37%)	30(15%)	43(22%)	195(100%)
2. Environmental activities Task: draw a leaf of a plant	61(31%)	61(31%)	33(17%)	40(21%)	195(100%)
3. Art & Craft Activities Task: color the picture you have drawn above	55(28%)	67(34%)	31(16%)	42(22%)	195(100%)
4. Music Activities Task: Sing a song on the part of your body	49(25%)	73(38%)	43(22%)	30(15%)	195(100%)

in interviews while the young children were directly observed by the researcher during their various learning activities. The data collected was coded and analyzed using statistical package of social science using descriptive and inferential statistics. The summary of the findings is discussed below.

5.1 Mother's Occupation and Level of Income is Directly Relational to School Participation in Learning

One of the main aspects captured in the objectives of this study was to determine the extent to which mothers' occupation and level of income influences children's school participation in learning in pre-school units under public elementary schools found in Kilifi south sub-county of Kilifi County.

The study revealed that mothers' occupation and level of income was strongly correlated. This implies that mothers' occupation and income level is positively correlated to pre-school children's school participation in learning. The findings on mothers' occupation and income level found out that a unit increase on mothers' income and socio-economic group lead to an increase of pre-school children's school participation in Kilifi south sub-county.

The correlation coefficient of the relationship between mothers' occupation and income level and pre-school children's school participation from teacher's opinions and from mother's opinions and from children's opinions showed a strong association between mothers occupation and preschool children's school participation in the study area. This has an implication that there is a strong positive correlation between mothers' occupation and level of income and pre-school children's school participation on Kilifi south sub-county of Kilifi County.

5.2 Mothers' Level of Education Influences Children's School Participation in Learning

The second main aspect captured in the objectives of this study was to determine the extent to which mothers' level of education influences children's school participation in learning, in Kilifi south of Kilifi County. This study brought to light that mothers' education level had a significant with preschool learners' participation in schools. The findings from the study also

indicated that a unit increase in mothers' education level would result to improvement in children's school participation. This has an implication that there is a powerful positive correlation between mothers' level of education and children's school participation determine the rationale of early years and how they enhance pre-school children's school participation.

5.3 Mothers' Attitude towards Education Influences Children's School Participation in Learning

The third main aspect captured in the objectives of this study was to establish the extent to which mothers' attitude towards education influences children's school participation in Kilifi South Sub-county of the Kilifi County. This study revealed that mothers' attitude towards education had a significant coefficient with preschool children's school participation. The findings of the study also indicated that a unit increase in the positivity of mothers' attitude towards education would result to significant improvement in children's school participation. This has an implication that there is a strong positive correlation between mothers' attitude towards education and children's school participation.

5.4 Early Years are Significant in Pre-Primary School Children's School Participation in Learning

The fourth and the last aspect captured in the objectives of this study was to find out the significance of early years and how they enhance pre-school children's school participation in learning in Kilifi South Sub-County of the Kilifi County. This study revealed that early years had a significant association with preschool children's school participation. The findings of the study also indicated that a unit increase in understanding the significance of early years and children's participation. This has an implication that there is a strong correlation between understanding the significance of early years and children's school participation in learning.

6. CONCLUSIONS

From the findings of this study the researcher concluded that there is a significant positive correlation between mother's occupation and income level and children's school participation in Kilifi County. Children whose mothers are in good formal employment exhibit higher academic

attainments than those whose mothers are in informal jobs. In addition, higher income mothers are capable of paying school fees in time, availing the necessary education needs and setting a more supportive learning environment at home unlike low income mothers who do not command financial ability to cater for their children's various educational needs.

The researcher concluded that there is significant positive correlation between mother's level of education and children's school participation in Kilifi South Sub- County of Kilifi County.

This is due to that mothers with high level of education greatly appreciate the value of education and involve themselves in the children's learning affairs such as assisting them with assignments, homework as well as spending a bigger portion of their time in play and games in comparison with mothers who have inferior levels of education.

Conclusion can also be drawn from the study that there is a significance positive correlation between mothers attitude towards educational and school participation in Kilifi County. This is because mothers with positive attitude towards education to avail intellectually stimulating home environment compared to their counter parts with negative educational attitude.

Finally from the findings of this study the researcher concluded that mothers' awareness of the significance of the early years enhances children school participation in Kilifi South of Kilifi County. Such mothers understand that early years are the fastest periods of growth and development in all domains. They are also aware that the experiences that children acquire in their early years keep influencing the child through his life, and therefore have advantage of these years by stimulating their children via availing profitable enjoyable experiences.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher drew the recommendations from the study objectives. They are as follows;

7.1 Mothers' Occupation and Level of Income and School Participation in Learning

Due to informal employment leading to low income levels of mothers in Kilifi South Sub County of Kilifi County as established in this study, the researcher recommends that the

government should avail bursary allocation to the children from poor mothers to cater for their educational needs, retain them in school and enhance their school participation in learning. The government should also boost the economic status of mothers in Kilifi County through investing in more income generating projects in the county that can economically benefit mothers.

7.2 Mothers' Level of Education and Children's School Participation in Learning

It was found out in this study that majority of the mothers in Kilifi South Sub County of Kilifi County are uneducated and that their low level of education decapacitates them from engaging in intentional mother- child conversations and reading simple stories to them, thus not stimulating them which promotes school participation. In regard to this fact it was recommended that elementary learning institutions in Kilifi South should bring on board appropriate systems to sensitize mothers on ways of involving themselves in their children's school participation by contributing positively in their educational activities at home.

7.3 Mothers' Attitude towards Education and Children's School Participation in Learning

The researcher realized that most mothers in Kilifi South Sub- County of Kilifi County due to being engaged in odd jobs felt inferior and had a negative attitude towards education and thus did not motivate their children to learn well. In regard to this fact it was recommended that the government should set systematic forums to sensitize mothers to have health and productive belief systems and attitude towards education.

7.4 Early Years and School Participation

This study established that there is poor knowledge / awareness on the significance of early years by mothers in Kilifi South Sub – County of Kilifi County. In light of this fact it was recommend that mothers should be highly sensitized about importance of the early years, benefits of investing in the same and how they can take maximum advantage of the years. The enlightenment is also to make them understand that learning does not begin at school but primarily at home and that it is during this optimum period that windows of opportunities lie.

7.5 Recommendations for Further Research

In relation to this study further research can be done on the following.

- a. Relationship between government bursaries on children's retention rate in pre-school units under public elementary schools in Kilifi County.
- b. School factors that influence material involvement in children's academic performance in public elementary school in Kilifi County.

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COMPETING INTERESTS

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Questionnaire for pre-school teachers

This questionnaire intends to collect information on “Relationship between mother’s socio-economic engagement and pre-school children’s school participation in pre-school units that are under public primary schools in Kilifi County; Kenya.” The information accessed will be usable at reaching the purpose of this study only.

Section A: Level of income and children’s school participation

1. In your opinion what is the monitory class of your pre-school children’s mothers?
High [] Middle [] low [] very low []
2. How often do you send your children home for various school payments?
Never [] Rarely [] Sometimes [] Often []
3. The affirmations below are in regard to the influence of mothers’ income on pre- school children’s school participation. Given along with, are the five preferences matching these affirmations?

Firmly Agree [FA] = 5, Agree [A] = 4, Undecided [U] = 3, Disagree [D] = 2, [FD] = 1

Tick in the box the most fitting feedback basing on your opinion.

Mothers income	5	4	3	2	1
	[FA]	[A]	[U]	[D]	[FD]
i. Elevated income mothers cater for educational needs of their children more than low income.					
ii. Children who come from impoverished families’ exhibit low self –worth compared to their counterparts from well off families.					
iii. Motivation for school participation is high amongst children whose mothers’ income is high than those whose mothers income is low.					

4. In your view, how does mothers’ income affect children’s school participation?

Section B: Mother’s Occupation and children’s school participation

5. From your observation, what is the major economic activity for most of your pre-school children’s mothers?
 - I. Peasant farmer []
 - II. House hold []
 - III. Formal employment []
 - IV. Non formal employment []

6. The affirmations below are in regard to the impact of mothers’ occupation on children’s School participation. Given are five preferences equaling to these statements:

Firmly Agree [FA] = 5, Agree [A] = 4, Undecided [U] = 3, Disagree [D] = 2, Firmly Disagree [FD] = 1.

Tick in the box the fitting feedback expressing your opinion.

Mothers occupation	5	4	3	2	1
	[FA]	[A]	[U]	[D]	[FD]
I. Children whose mothers are in Formal employment exhibit better school participation than those whose mothers are in odd jobs.					
II. Mothers in informal employment are financially limited to make provision for their children's academic requirements than those in formal employment.					
III. Mothers in Formal employment due to high self - esteem exhibit positive attitude towards their children's school participation and thus transmit the same to them.					

Section C: mother's level of education and children's School participation

7. In your opinion what is the educational level of majority of your pre- school children's mothers? Uneducated [] primary level [] Secondary level [] college / University []
8. Do you think that your pre-school children's mother's level of education affects the children's school participation? Yes [] NO []
If yes, how? [Explain].....
9. The statements below are in regard to the influence of mothers' level of education on pre-school children's school participation. Given also are the five options corresponding to these statements:

Firmly agree [FA] = 5, Agree A = 4, Undecided [U] = 3, Disagree [D] =2, Firmly Disagree [FD] =1

In expression of your mind, tick in the box the fitting feedback

Mother's level of education	5	4	3	2	1
	[F]	[A]	[U]	[D]	[FD]
I. Highly educated mothers are more dedicated in their children's education than unschooled mothers.					
II. Mothers with higher level of education are more capable of availing a beneficial learning environment at home for their children than those with inferior level of education /un educated.					
III. High levels of education of some mothers is chiefly the reason of their children being more proficient in language (English/Kiswahili) than those whose mothers command low levels of education / un educated.					
IV. Highly educated mothers understand the importance of early years and thus take advantage of the same for early stimulation.					

Section D: Mother's attitude and children's school participation

10. How can you rate your pre- school children's mothers' attitude towards children's school participation?
Very poor [] Poor [] Fair [] Good [] Very Good []
11. How can you rate mothers' – teacher communication in your school?
Very poor [] Poor [] Fair [] Good [] Very Good []
12. How can you rate mothers monitoring of their children's educational progress in your school?
Very poor [] poor [] Fair [] Good [] Very Good []
13. Below are affirmations regarding the influence of mothers' attitude on children's educational achievement. Given additionally are five preferences matching these statements:

Firmly Agree [FA] = 5, Agree [A] = 4, undecided [U] = 3, Disagree [D] = 2, Firmly Disagree [FD] = 1

Kindly indicate in the spaces provided by a way of ticking the option that is best in line with your opinion on the statements provided in the table below

Mother's attitude	5 [FA]	4 [A]	3 [U]	2 [D]	1 [FD]
i. Children's school participation is positively correlated with the mothers' attitude towards education.					
ii. Mothers who are enthusiastic about their children's learning process positively influence them to be active participants of various school learning activities.					

14. In your opinion how does mother's attitude affect their pre-school children's participation?

SECTION E MOTHERS AWARENESS OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF EARLY YEARS IN REWARD TO CHILDREN'S SCHOOL PARTICIPATION

15. How can you rate your pre-school Children's mother's awareness of significance of early years in regard to children's school participation?

Very poor Poor Fair Good Very good

16. How can you rate your pre-school mother's investing in their pre-school children's early years.

Very poor Poor Fair Good Very good

17. How can you rate your pre-school Children's mother's level of stimulating their children at early age?

Very poor Poor Fair Good Very good

18. Kindly indicate in the spaces provided by a way of ticking the option that is bestly in line with your opinion on the comments provided in the table below

Mothers awareness of the significance of early years	5 (FA)	4 (A)	3 (U)	2 (D)	1 (FD)
Mother's awareness of the significance of early years positively correlates them to invest in the same.					
Mother's consciousness of the significance of early years are more capable of stimulating their pre-school children at very early ages					

Appendix 2: Interview Questions for Mothers

Thank you for accepting to be interviewed for this research project. The information collected will be useful for academic purposes only. It shall be utilized by administrative officers in schools, facilitators, educators and other educational collaborators to improve pre-school children's education. The interview should take only 15 minutes. **The report will not by any means directly quote you in this study.** The research is about "Relationship between socioeconomic engagement of mothers and their pre-school children's school participation". I would wish to find out how your occupation, level of income, level of education and attitude towards education influences pre-school children's school participation.

Translated to Kiswahili language

Asante kwa kukubali kuhojiwa kwa mradi huu wa utafiti. Taarifa zitakazokusanywa zitakuwa muhimu kwa madhumuni ya kitaaluma pekee. Itatumiwa na maafisa wa utawala shuleni, wawezeshaji, waelimishaji na washiriki wengine wa elimu ili kuboresha elimu ya watoto wa shule ya awali. Mahojiano yanapaswa kuchukua dakika 15 tu. Ripoti haitakunukuu moja kwa moja katika utafiti huu kwa njia yoyote. Utafiti unahusu "Uhusiano kati ya ushiriki wa kijamii na kiuchumi wa akina mama na ushiriki wao wa watoto wa shule ya awali". Ningependa kujua jinsi kazi yako, kiwango cha mapato, kiwango cha elimu na mtazamo wa elimu huathiri ushiriki wa watoto wa shule ya awali.

Section A: Mother's Occupation

1. What is your occupation? _____
2. What approximate time do you spend at work? _____
3. Do you think that the amount of time you spend at work affects your involvement in education of your child or children? [If yes how?] _____
4. Do you get enough amount of time to spend with your children for better attachment before they start schooling? _____

Translated to Kiswahili language

Sehemu A: Kazi Ya Mama.

1. Kazi yako ni nini?
2. Je, unatumia muda gani kazini?
3. Je, unafikiri kwamba muda unaotumia kazini huathiri ushiriki wako katika elimu ya mtoto wako au watoto wako? [Kama ndio vipi?]
4. Je, unapata muda wa kutosha wa kukaa na watoto wako kwa ajili ya uhusiano bora kabla ya kuanza shule?

Section B: Mother's Level of Income

5. How can you rate your income level per month in Kshs?
Below 5000 [] 5000-10,000 [] 11,000- 20,000 [] 21,000- 30,000 []
31,000- 40,000 [] 41,000 -50,000 [] 50,000 and above.
6. Do you think that your income level affects your ability to cater for your child's educational needs? (If yes how?)

Translated to Kiswahili language

Sehemu B: Kiwango cha mama cha mapato

5. Unawezaje kukadiria kiwango cha mapato yako kwa mwezi kwa Kshs?
Chini ya 5,000 [] 5,000- 10,000 [] 11,000- 20,000 [] 21,000- 30,000 []
31,000- 40,000 [] 41,000 -50,000 [] 50,000 na zaidi. []
6. Je, unafikiri kwamba kiwango chako cha mapato huathiri uwezo wako wa kukidhi mahitaji ya elimu ya mtoto wako? (ikiwa ndio vipi?)

Section C: Mother's Level of Education

7. Up to what level have you attained education?
Primary [] Secondary [] College/ University [] Uneducated []
8. In your opinion, does the level of your education influences the way you get involved in your children's education?

Translated to Kiswahili language

Sehemu C: Ngazi ya mama ya elimu.

- 7. Umefikia kiwango gani cha elimu?
Msingi [] Sekondari [] Chuo/ Chuo Kikuu [] Hajasoma []
- 8. Je, kwa maoni yako, kiwango cha elimu yako kinaathiri jinsi unavyohusika katika elimu ya watoto wako?

Section D: Mother’s attitude

- 9. Do you think that your attitude is positive towards school participation? If yes, how?
- 10. Do you think that you are well motivated enough to support your child or children their homework at home? (Anything else?).

Translated to Kiswahili language

Sehemu ya D: Mtazamo wa mama.

- 9. Je, unafikiri kwamba mtazamo wako ni chanya kuhusu ushiriki wa shule? Kama ndiyo, vipi?
- 10. Je, unafikiri kwamba una ari ya kutosha kusaidia mtoto wako au watoto kazi zao za nyumbani nyumbani? (Kitu kingine?).

Appendix 3: Observation for children

This tool is convenient for young children since it enables the researcher to capture children’s actual behaviour; and thus first-hand information. The observation is based on a number of learning areas including Mathematics activities, English activities and integrated activities. The outcome of this observation is rated based on the level of expectation that the children attains.

Furnished additionally are the four levels of expectations options corresponding to children’s attainment.

Exceeding Expectation (E.E) =4 marks, Meeting Expectations (M.E) =3 marks

Approaching Expectations (A.E) = 2 marks, Below Expectation (B.E) =1 mark

Activity area	E.E (4MKS)	M.E (3MKS)	A.E (2MKS)	B.E (1MK)
Mathematics Activities				
Qn.; Join the dots of the numbers given below 1-10				
English Activities				
Activity 2- Oral questions				
Qn. (a); What is your name?				
Qn. (b); How old are you?				
Integrated activities				
I. Hygiene and nutrition activities				
Qn. (a); Wash your hands clean.				
Environmental Activities				
Qn.(a); Draw a leaf of a tree.				
Qn. (b); Draw a table.				
Art And Craft Activities				
Qn.; Color the pictures you have drawn above.				

Activity area	E.E (4MKS)	M.E (3MKS)	A.E (2MKS)	B.E (1MK)
Music Qn.; Sing a song on the parts of your body.				

SECTION A DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Avoid writing both your name and that of the school on the questionnaires.

Tick where appropriate

1. Gender

Male Female

2. Age in years

Below 20 21-30 31-40 41-50

51-60 Above 60

3. Under what category does your professional qualification fit?

Doctorate Masters Bachelors Diploma

Complicate

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