

Influence Of Parental Education On Pupils' Enrolment In Public Pre-Primary Schools In Lamu East Sub-County, Lamu County, Kenya

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Abstract

The purpose of research was to investigate influence of parental education on pupils' enrolment in public pre-primary schools in Lamu East Sub-County, Lamu County, Kenya. The study employed quantitative research methodology and a survey research design where cross-sectional data was employed. The target population consisted of pre-primary parents, teachers and children in Lamu East Sub-County totalling to 1,641 respondents. Stratified sampling was employed to ensure a representative sample by dividing the population into strata based on sub-county and wards. Samples were randomly selected from each stratum to capture diverse subgroups accurately reflecting the overall population. The final sample size was 321 respondents comprising of 62 pre-primary parents, 12 pre-primary teachers, and 247 pre-primary pupils. The reliability of the questionnaires and observation tools was established using Cronbach's alpha formula. A Cronbach's alpha value greater than 0.75 was deemed acceptable for ensuring consistency and dependability in the collected data. For data analysis, both descriptive and inferential techniques were employed. Descriptive analysis provided an overview of the data, presented in frequency tables for straightforward interpretation. Inferential analysis, including correlation and multiple linear regression, assessed relationships between parental socio-economic factors and pupils' enrolment. Data analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 30. The study found that parental education showed a positive correlation with enrolment, but this was not statistically significant suggesting that education alone does not drive enrolment changes. The study concluded that while parental education positively impacts pre-primary enrolment, it is not statistically significant on its own but parental income shows a strong and significant correlation with enrolment, highlighting the need to address financial barriers for low-income families. Recommendations call for addressing broader socio-economic factors, financial barriers, cultural attitudes and security issues to improve pre-primary school enrolment in Lamu East Sub-County.

Keywords: Parental Education, Pupils' Enrolment, Public Pre-primary Schools

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I. Introduction

Access to Early Childhood Education (ECE) is a global concern, with governments worldwide struggling to establish adequate policy frameworks (Mahon, 2016). The socio-economic status (SES) of parents, including income, education level, and employment status, significantly influences children's enrolment in pre-primary education across various countries, such as Belgium, the USA, Brazil, and China. These factors determine parents' ability to afford, prioritize, and access early educational opportunities, thereby shaping children's educational trajectories.

In Belgium, children from higher SES backgrounds tend to enrol in pre-primary education earlier and for longer periods. Higher household incomes allow parents to afford private education or supplementary resources, enhancing early learning experiences. Additionally, educated parents are more likely to value and invest in early childhood education, recognizing its long-term benefits (Vandenbroeck and Lazzari, 2014; OECD, 2016). In the United States, parental SES is a critical determinant of pre-primary enrolment. Higher-income families can afford high-quality pre-primary programs, while parents with higher education levels recognize the importance of early education. Employment status, particularly stable employment, also influences enrolment decisions (Magnuson and Waldfogel, 2016).

In Brazil, children from lower SES backgrounds face significant barriers to pre-primary enrolment. Low-income families often cannot afford pre-primary education, and publicly funded programs are insufficient to meet demand. Educated parents tend to prioritize early education, enrolling their children in pre-primary programs for a solid educational foundation (Barros and Mendonça, 1997; Curi, Menezes-Filho and Reis, 2014). In China, SES

strongly influences pre-primary enrolment, with disparities between urban and rural areas. Higher income levels enable families to access better quality pre-primary education, particularly in urban regions where facilities are more abundant. Educated parents are more likely to enrol their children in pre-primary programs, understanding its impact on future academic success (Li and Qiu, 2018; UNICEF, 2019).

In New Zealand, the Ministry of Education has implemented a strategic plan since 2002 to improve ECE quality. Leadership is crucial in Curriculum-Based Curriculum (CBC) settings, significantly impacting educational outcomes. Caribbean governments, particularly Trinidad and Tobago, have also prioritized leadership in Early Childhood Development programs, emphasizing its role in academic achievement, poverty reduction, and cost savings (Brown, 2015; Wild and Berger, 2016; Roberts, 2016).

In Africa, countries are developing networks for CBC capacity building, knowledge sharing, and cooperation. However, support for CBC is often scattered, with few countries allocating sufficient education budgets to CBC. The World Bank and partners have invested in African community initiatives, emphasizing the need for comprehensive CBC programs to improve child development and community stability (Eberhard, Gratwick, Morella and Antmann, 2016; Cherotich, 2023).

In Ethiopia, SES significantly impacts pre-primary enrolment. Families with higher income and education levels are more likely to enrol their children in pre-primary programs, with urban areas showing higher enrolment rates due to better access to educational facilities (UNESCO, 2015). Similarly, in Zimbabwe, SES plays a crucial role in pre-primary enrolment, with wealthier families better positioned to afford private education (Bhurekeni, 2022).

In Kenya, early childhood enrolment has seen significant growth, although disparities remain. Socio-economic factors such as income, education, and occupation influence enrolment in Curriculum-Based Curriculum (CBC) schools, particularly in regions like Lamu East Sub County. Government initiatives have aimed to increase access to ECE, but challenges persist, particularly in rural and underprivileged areas (Masika, 2015; Nafungo, 2015; Republic of Kenya, 2010). Local studies in Kenya have highlighted various challenges related to pre-primary enrolment.

In Nairobi County, parental SES dictates enrolment decisions, with economically disadvantaged families facing higher costs and competitive admissions (Muthama, 2019). In Kajiado Central Sub-County, income levels, parental education, and occupation are key determinants of pre-primary enrolment, with disparities observed in remote areas (Kosgei and Kariuki, 2016). Studies in Igembe South Sub-County and Bomet East Sub-County have also emphasized the role of parental income, education, and occupation in shaping enrolment decisions, with recommendations for localized strategies to improve infrastructure, parental awareness, and community involvement (Mutie, 2018; Kiambati, 2020).

In Lamu East Sub County, socio-economic factors such as income, education, and access to resources significantly impact pre-primary enrolment. The study highlights the need for targeted policies, community engagement, and awareness campaigns to improve enrolment rates and emphasize the long-term benefits of ECE for both children and communities. The current study investigates socio-economic factors influencing preschool enrolment in Lamu East Sub County, Kenya, highlighting limited research on preschool enrolment. Between 2021-2023, there has been declining enrolment in ECDE schools in Lamu East Sub County. Faza, Basuba, and Kiunga Wards struggle with pre-school enrolment in Lamu East Sub County as shown in table 1 below.

Table 1 Public Pre-primary Schools Enrolment by Gender and Sub-County in Lamu County

Subcounty	Year	2021		2022		2023		
		Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Totals
Lamu west	Witu	907	1051	1154	1056	1154	1024	6346
	Amu Mkomani	376	160	411	329	252	318	1846
	Shela	65	110	72	56	91	52	446
	Hindi	514	456	522	470	509	426	2897
	Mkunumbi	316	291	328	234	355	243	1767
	Hongwe	341	306	326	387	336	392	2088
	Bahari	506	503	509	558	506	506	3145
	Faza	546	540	490	446	396	390	2808
Lamu east	Basuba	63	97	79	83	65	72	461
	Kiunga	112	104	118	99	113	84	630

Source: Lamu East Sub County Education office (2025)

There are disparities in enrolment across sub counties in Lamu county. Lamu east subcounty enrolment for boys reduced from 721 in 2021 to 574 in 2023. Girl's enrolment reduced from 741 in 2021 to 546 in 2023. Lamu west for instance registered an increased enrolment from 3025 boys and 2877 girls in 2021 to 3203 boys and 3018 girls in 2023. Research has shown that even with introduction of Free Primary Education, ECDE education is characterized by declining enrolment and low completion rates in some wards and sub counties. This is evident

that there exist socio-economic factors of low enrolment in public CBC in the larger Lamu county and more especially in the Lamu east subcounty.

In an attempt to create access to Education for All (EFA) by the year 2015 as provided for in the Dakar Framework of April 2000, Kenya Government has come up with policies such as Free Primary Education and Free Secondary Education of (Abuya, Admassu, Ngware, Onsomu and Oketch, 2015). Research by Ochieng (2015) in Kisumu County compared enrolment patterns between public and private pre-primary schools, revealing significant disparities influenced by socio-economic status. Private schools, perceived to offer better quality education, attracted children from more affluent families, while public schools faced challenges related to funding and infrastructure. This disparity highlighted how economic barriers restrict access to early childhood education (ECE) in Kisumu County, impacting children's developmental opportunities.

II. Statement Of The Problem

Kenya's Constitution 2010 guarantees every child the right to basic education (Basic Education Act, 2013), yet the implementation of pre-primary education is primarily managed by local communities, parents, and county governments, with minimal national government support. Despite global recognition of the importance of pre-primary education for academic success, societal recognition and enrolment rates remain low, particularly in marginalized regions like Lamu East Sub County. Lamu East Sub County, despite its high economic potential, has experienced a concerning decline in public pre-primary school enrolment since 2021, standing at 1,462 in 2021 compared to 5,902 in Lamu West Sub County (see Table 1).

This trend contradicts national initiatives where enrolment has been increasing. Factors such as marital status, education level, school fees, financial incapability, occupation, and income significantly influence pre-primary access (Momanyi, Odongo and Mwebi, 2018). Currently, there is no systematic research to analyse the determinants of low enrolment in Lamu East Sub County. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the socio-economic factors affecting low enrolment in public pre-primary schools in Lamu East Sub County. The goal is to provide insights to primary education stakeholders on the causes and potential measures to address this issue, ensuring that every child can exercise their constitutional right to education.

III. Research Objective

To assess the influence of parental education on pupils' enrolment in public pre-primary schools in Lamu East Sub-County, Lamu County, Kenya.

IV. Research Hypothesis

There is no significant influence of parental education on pupils' enrolment in public pre-primary schools in Lamu East Sub County, Lamu County Kenya.

V. Empirical Literature Review

Parental education and Pupils' Enrolment in Public Pre-primary Schools

Socio-cultural factors influence education transition and retention, influenced by parents' education levels. Parents with higher education attribute varying education transition and retention to socio-cultural factors, urging enrolment and pushing children through (Wanyonyi, 2018). Parents' decisions impact children's retention in school; those with regulated supervision, individual decision-making, and moral support are more involved (UNICEF, 2016). Selita (2020) a social scientist and marriage counsellor, found that social-cultural practices significantly influence education disparities, with cultural factors being significant determinants. Modern societies face constant changes, requiring breaking cultural yoke to promote gender equality and sustainable development (Ottervik, 2017). Institutions of higher learning increasingly see women seeking further studies, with the majority being single or widowed. This suggests that men and women who break social-cultural bonds enjoy higher education benefits.

Chebet (2011) study in Trans-mara District found that social-cultural factors impact locals' economic status, affecting life skills acquisition through education. Traditional practices hinder women's progress, as they often don't reach primary education levels. Education is a vital, sustainable inheritance parents want their children to inherit. Socio-economic status impacts young people's education, but unequal opportunities are offered, with boys receiving more resources than girls, contributing to low retention rates in education (Adrian,2010). Moral decadence in schools leads to societal challenges. Increased dropout rates in girls reduce transition rates from primary to secondary school (Wanyonyi, 2018). Semi-literate individuals in the community struggle academically. Wanyonyi 's study reveals rural communities view girls as caretakers, limiting their academic progress and promoting gender equality through limited exposure to education.

Men with higher education prefer less educated spouses in marriage to eliminate competition and make educated spouses submissive, often funded by husbands (Selita, 2020). Parents with education are aware of their children's education benefits and have access to social networks, motivating them to focus on education as role

models (Ertan, 2017). Parents with education organize private tuition and reward children's academic achievements, fostering positive attitudes towards education. Kenyan parents who lack education knowledge prevent children from pursuing preschool (Katwi, 2016).

Parents with education reduce children's school dropout rates. Educated mothers are aware of the consequences of retrogressive social and cultural activities, reducing exposure and spending more time with their children in educational matters. Parents who are educated help children with academics, supervise progress, and support their children (Bradbury and Roberts-Holmes, 2017). This study examined parental education impact on learners' transition and retention in Msambweni schools. Abagi (2005) highlights girls in low-income households face disadvantaged status due to parents prioritizing boys' education, while higher-income, better-paying parents prioritize education for both. Uneducated parents are often disadvantaged in supporting children's education, especially girls. This study compared girls and boys from low-income households.

Mainye, Benson and Benard (2018) studies in Kenya found that parental education significantly impacts children's school progress, with educated parents expected to positively influence their children's education. Appleton (2008) found a direct relationship between parental education and girls' enrolment and retention in school. High-income parents provide a conducive home environment, school necessities, and understand the value of education for their children. Shikwasha (2015) study focuses on preschool factors influencing ECDE enrolment, not primary school achievements. A study in Kenya by Stephanie (2015) in Rwanda found parents with no education certificate and college diploma differed in involvement in pre-primary school activities, with low-income parents feeling less comfortable in partnership modes.

Despite the fact that parents' satisfaction with and involvement in pre-primary education were related construct (Griffith, 2010), the findings would only be generalized to pre-primary school parents in other regions with the same characteristics, hence the need for present study to be done with pre-primary school parents in Lamu East sub-county. Panga (2020) emphasizes the importance of a strong home foundation for a child's moral, spiritual, and intellectual development. Without this foundation, schools struggle to build upon, impacting both parents and the community (Kraft, Papay, Johnson, Charner-Laird, Ng, and Reinhorn, 2015).

According to Umeana (2017) parental educational value directly impacts children's aspirations, with children imitating their parents and aspiring to be highly educated. Low education levels disadvantage children, creating a cycle of uneducated family members. Highly educated children are more ambitious and achieve higher levels of education. Parental education significantly impacts preschool enrolment, influencing parental involvement, support, and expectations. Umeana (2017) argues that parental education contributes to good income and a solid foundation for children's success. Therefore, parents' efficacy has stronger predictors of schooling success.

VI. Research Methodology

Research employed quantitative research methodology as data was corrected by use of questionnaires and observation schedules. A survey research design using cross-sectional data was employed. The target population consisted of pre-primary parents, teachers, and children in Lamu East Sub County, totaling 1,641 individuals. Stratified sampling was utilized to ensure a representative sample by dividing the population into strata based on sub-county and wards. Samples were randomly selected from each stratum to capture diverse subgroups accurately reflecting the overall population. The final sample size was 321 respondents, including 62 pre-primary parents, 12 pre-primary teachers, and 247 pre-primary children.

VII. Research Findings And Discussions

Report on Parental Education and Pupils' Enrollment in Public Pre-Primary Schools

The objective was to assess the influence of parental education on pupils' enrolment in public pre-primary schools in Lamu East Sub-County. Parental education was then determined based on the argument that a mean score of 3 in Likert scale represents neutral positions with the statement, mean score of less than 3 represents negative view of the statement and greater than 3 represents a positive view with the statement. The data from table 1 provides a comprehensive overview of the effect of parental education on pre-primary school enrolment in Lamu East, supported by mean scores and standard deviations that further illuminate the trends identified. The findings are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Report on Parents Questionnaire on Parental Education influence on Pupils Enrollment Key SA-Strongly Agree, A -Agree, N- Neutral, D-Disagree, SD-Strongly Disagree, Std Dev Standard Deviation, F-Frequency, %-Percentage.

Statements	F	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	Std Dev
Literate parents motivate children to go to pre-primary school	%	14.4	31.9	20.1	17.9	15.7	3.1	1.512

Illiterate parents hardly pay attention if their children are absent from pre-primary school in students' discipline	F %	13 20.3	20 32.9	13 21.2	11 17.1	5 8.5	3.39	0.874
Literate parents supervise their children's pre-primary school work at home	F %	15 24.3	26 41.3	8 12.9	8 12.9	5 8.6	3.6	1.139
Illiterate parents hardly pay attention if their children are absent from pre-primary school in students' discipline	F %	13 20.3	20 32.9	13 21.2	11 17.1	5 8.5	3.39	0.874
Lack of awareness is the reason why children were not enrolled in pre-primary school	F %	15 24.3	26 41.3	8 12.9	8 12.9	5 8.6	3.6	1.139
Uneducated parents encourage their sons to go to pre-primary school as a way of compensation for their parents' education	F %	18 28.6	19 31.3	11 18.5	8 13.0	5 8.6	3.58	0.671
Uneducated parents don't educate their sons & daughters	F %	17 27.1	25 40.2	7 11.2	6 10.1	7 11.4	3.62	0.834
Most drop outs come from homes whose parents have not gone to school	F %	4 5.7	21 34.3	14 22.9	19 31.4	4 5.7	3.03	1.063
Most parents never attended school, hence do not bother with their children attending pre-primary school	F %	12 18.6	35 55.7	6 10.0	6 10.0	4 5.7	3.71	1.079
Overall							3.390	1.053

Source: Researcher, 2025

The key scale of interpreting the Likert scale mean score was given as follows: 1.0-2.4 (Disagree), 2.5-3.3 (Neutral), and 3.4-5.0 (Positive view).

Starting with the motivation of children by literate parents, the data indicates that 14.4% of respondents strongly agreed, and 31.9% agreed, resulting in a total of 46.3% acknowledging the motivating role of literate parents. The mean score of 3.10, coupled with a standard deviation of 1.512, indicates a moderate level of agreement but also suggests variability in perceptions, reflecting differing experiences within the community. Regarding the early enrolment of children by literate parents, 18.5% strongly agreed, and 33.1% agreed, leading to a combined total of 51.6% who believe literate parents are proactive in enrolling their children early. The mean score of 3.15 suggests fairly consistent beliefs; however, the standard deviation of 1.367 implies that some parents still encounter barriers to timely enrolment.

In terms of supervision of children's pre-primary work at home, 25.7% strongly agreed, and 31.4% agreed, resulting in a total of 57.1% recognizing the importance of parental supervision. A mean score of 3.33, along with a lower standard deviation of 0.942, indicates a strong consensus among respondents on this issue, underscoring the perceived role of literate parents in fostering academic success. The findings also reveal that illiterate parents tend to be less attentive to their children's school attendance, as indicated by 20.3% strongly agreeing and 32.9% agreeing, which combines for a total of 53.2% acknowledging this trend.

A mean score of 3.39, with a standard deviation of 0.874, supports the notion that parental education levels correlate with attentiveness to schooling, with respondents demonstrating a consistent view regarding this matter. Interestingly, the claim that lack of awareness contributes to low enrolment rates garnered significant support, with 24.3% strongly agreeing and 41.3% agreeing, leading to a total of 65.6% advocating for increased awareness. A mean score of 3.60 reflects strong belief in this assertion, while the standard deviation of 1.139 indicates some diversity of opinions on the topic. In examining the sentiment that uneducated parents encourage their sons to attend pre-primary school as compensation for their own lack of education, 28.6% strongly agreed, and 31.3% agreed, totalling 59.9%. A mean score of 3.58, coupled with a low standard deviation of 0.671, suggests a strong consensus among respondents regarding this viewpoint. Moreover, the perception that uneducated parents neglect their children's education received considerable support, with 27.1% strongly agreeing and 40.2% agreeing, amounting to a total of 67.3%.

The mean score of 3.62 and a standard deviation of 0.834 reinforce the notion of educational neglect among illiterate parents, emphasizing the need for targeted educational interventions. Regarding the belief that most dropouts come from homes where parents have not attended school, only 5.7% strongly agreed, while 34.3% agreed, indicating a lower recognition of this issue, with a total of 39.6%. The mean score of 3.03 suggests moderate agreement, with a higher standard deviation of 1.063 reflecting varied experiences within the community concerning dropout rates.

Lastly, the claim that many parents who never attended school show little interest in their children's education was supported by 18.6% of respondents who strongly agreed and 55.7% who agreed, resulting in a substantial total of 74.3%. A high mean score of 3.71 indicates strong consensus on parental disengagement, further highlighting the impact of educational backgrounds on children's schooling. Overall, the findings yield an overall mean score of 3.39 and a standard deviation of 1.053, suggesting a collective positive view of the

influence of parental education on pre-primary school enrolment. While there is general agreement on the benefits of parental education, the variability indicated by the standard deviation's points to the complexity of the issue. Addressing these variances through targeted community engagement and awareness programs could be pivotal in improving educational outcomes in Lamu East Sub County.

VIII. Linearity Test

Before fitting a linear regression model, it is important to test whether there is a linear relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variables. A linearity test was conducted for this purpose. The null hypothesis assumes that the relationship between the variables is linear, while the alternative hypothesis states that it is not. If the p-value for the deviation from linearity is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis is not rejected, indicating the relationship is linear. The linearity test results are presented in tables 15, 16, 17 and 18 below.

Table 2 Linearity Test Results for Parental Education ANOVA

			Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Pupils' enrolment Parental education	Between Groups	(Combined)	12.115	6	.932	5.540	.000
		Linearity	8.406	1	8.406	49.969	.000
		Deviation	3.709	12	.309	1.837	.064
	Within Groups		9.421	43	.168		
	Total		23.829	62			

Source: Researcher, 2025

Table 2 shows that the p-value for the deviation from linearity is 0.064, which is greater than 0.05. Thus, we fail to reject the null hypothesis, indicating that the relationship between Parental education and Pupils' enrolment can be considered linear. It is therefore concluded that there is a linear relationship between Parental education and Pupils' enrolment.

IX. Hypothesis Testing

The multiple linear regression model was used to test the hypothesis and show whether the independent variables were indeed significant predictors of the dependent variable.

H01: There is no significant influence of parental education on pupils' enrolment in public pre-primary schools in Lamu East Sub County.

To test the hypothesis "H01: Parental Education has no significant influence on pre-primary school enrolment in Lamu East sub county," we can analyze the regression coefficients provided for parental education. The unstandardized coefficient is 0.043, with a standard error of 0.150. The standardized coefficient (Beta) is also 0.043, indicating a very small effect size. The t-value associated with this coefficient is 0.288, which suggests that the coefficient is not significantly different from zero. Most importantly, the significance level (p-value) is 0.777.

In hypothesis testing, we typically set a significance level (α) of 0.05. Since the p-value of 0.777 is much greater than this threshold, we fail to reject the null hypothesis. This indicates that there is no statistically significant effect of parental education on pre-primary school enrolment in Lamu East. Thus, the results suggest that variations in parental education levels do not significantly influence enrolment within this context.

The high p-value further supports this conclusion, reinforcing the idea that factors other than parental education may be more critical in affecting enrolment in pre-primary schools. Overall, the analysis leads us to accept the null hypothesis, affirming that parental education does not have a significant impact on this aspect of pre-primary school enrolment in Lamu East sub county.

X. Conclusions

Overall, the mean score of 3.39, accompanied by a standard deviation of 1.053, reflects the collective views of respondents regarding the impact of parental education on pre-primary school enrolment. While there is a general agreement on the positive effects of parental education, the variability indicated by the standard deviation underscores the complexity of this issue. The analysis reveals a positive correlation between parental education and parental income ($r = 0.199$, $p = 0.069$), along with a potential trend toward increased pupil enrolment ($r = 0.042$, $p = 0.101$).

Although these correlations do not reach statistical significance, they suggest that higher levels of parental education may be linked to greater income, which could in turn enhance enrolment rates. This implies that as parents become more educated, they are likely to have more resources to support their children's education. Further examination of the coefficients for parental education reveals an unstandardized coefficient of 0.043 with

a standard error of 0.150. The standardized coefficient (Beta) also stands at 0.043, and the t-value is 0.288, resulting in a significance level of 0.777. This high p-value indicates that parental education does not have a statistically significant effect on pupil enrolment, suggesting that variations in educational levels alone are insufficient to drive changes in enrolment rates.

XI. Recommendations

To enhance pre-primary school enrolment, it is recommended that Ministry of Education interventions address not only parental education but also the broader socioeconomic factors influencing enrolment outcomes, recognizing the complexities inherent in these relationships.

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