FACTORS INFLUENCING THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC EDUCATION IN PRE-PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN LOWER YATTA DISTRICT, KITUI COUNTY, KENYA

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A Research Project Report Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement of the Requirement for the Award of Master of Arts Degree in Project Planning and Management of the University of Nairobi.

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DECLARATION

This project report is my original work and has not been submitted or presented for an academic award in any other university.

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This research project report has been submitted for examination with my approval as university supervisor.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate my work to my beloved husband Geoffrey Mbindyo and my children Rachael, Maureen and Alex for their inspiration, support and understanding during my study time.
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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CRC – Convention on the Rights of the Child

DEB – District Education Board

DEO – District Education Officer

ECD – Early Childhood Development

ECDE – Early Childhood Development and Education

EFA – Education for All

GOK – Government of Kenya

ISCE – International Standard Classification of Education

MDGs – Millennium Development Goals

MOE – Ministry of Education

MOEST – Ministry of Education Science & Technology

NGO – Non Governmental Organization

NIHHD – National Institute of Health and Human Development

PESP – Poverty Eradication Strategy Paper

PTR – Pupil Teacher Ratio

UNESCO – United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNICEF – United Nations Children Education’s Fund
ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the factors that influence the quality of Academic education in Pre-primary schools in Lower Yatta District. The study sought to determine the influence of availability of Teaching/Learning resources on the quality of academic education in Pre-primary schools, how the learning environment influences the quality of academic education in Pre-primary schools and the influence of teachers’ characteristics on the quality of academic education in Pre-primary school in Lower Yatta District. This study adopted both descriptive survey design and inferential statistics on a sample of 125 pre-schools teachers, 125 head teachers, and 125 children in 125 public pre-schools; stratified sampling was used to select the sample to be included in the study. Both a questionnaire and checklist were used for data collection. The collected data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The study established that From the findings of this study the researcher made the following conclusions. First, majority of the schools had teaching and learning materials in their schools. These included activities, books, puzzles, charts and flash cards and that there is significant relationship between availability of Teaching/Learning resources and the quality of academic education. This means the more the Teaching/Learning material the better the quality of education. Secondly, there is significant relationship between learning environment and the quality of academic education in Pre-primary schools. This means that the learning environment greatly influences the quality of academic education. Finally, there is a significant relationship between teachers’ characteristics and the quality of academic education meaning the teacher characteristics affects the academic quality. From the findings of this study the researcher recommended that there is need for the ministry of education to allocate funds for funding pre-school Teaching/Learning materials. The school head teachers should improve the learning environment for their schools so as to improve academic education, the DEOs office should organize in-service trainings for pre-school teachers so as to improve their teachers characteristics and parents should be highly involved in the learning activities of their children so as to improve the quality of academic education.
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

The international standard Classification of Education (ISCE) defines Pre-primary education as comprising programs that offer structured purposeful learning activities in a school or a centre (as opposed to home) to children aged 3-6 years (Mishra, 2009). The aim of the pre-primary education program is to provide a holistic and integrated programme that meets the child’s cognitive, social, moral, spiritual, emotional and physical needs in public and private schools (Aga Khan 2007; GOK/MOEST policy, 2005).

According to studies done by New (2000) and Mallory (1996) in the United States of America showed that the quality of public pre-primary education in most states were poor characterized by inadequate physical infrastructure and poor learning environments; inability of most states to systematically provide quality pre - primary educational opportunities for all children three to five years of age and their incapability of responding to the expressed need of affordable and high quality early care and education. Global studies show that most countries do not give much attention to pre-primary education instead concentrating their recourses to achieve universal primary education (UNESCO, 2004).
The Kenya National Early Childhood Development (KNECD) service standard guideline of 2006 identifies specific pre-primary educational quality features in terms of service standard guidelines that should be sustained and promoted to ensure that all pre-primary Education centers provide sustainable quality ECD services for young children (MOEST, 2008). The future of Africa rests with its youngest children, yet the majorities are growing up in conditions of dire poverty with large numbers denied the nutrition, health care, quality interactions, and play and sustainable learning opportunities that will enable them to develop to their full potential. Few parents know what is at stake, and there is little demand for quality ECDE services. Conspicuously one of these key features is learning materials which are supposed to be adequate, safe and developmentally appropriate (KNECD, 2006).

Government responses are variable, poorly financed and in many cases inconsistent in regard to ECDE programs. While many initiatives have succeeded in achieving specific actions in a single country, for example, by developing a national policy or supporting a new service, there have not been significant efforts to address the sector as a whole in the region. The Early Childhood Development and Education Program (ECDE), program of Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (OSISA) now wishes to put into place an initiative that seeks to make significant improvements in the early childhood sector in Southern Africa by engaging in multi-leveled interventions in countries in the SADC region. The overall strategy will aim to strengthen the capacity of relevant Ministries and civil society; raise public awareness; build capability of professionals, community workers and parents; evaluate and document good practices; and establish national and
regional networks. The goal of the newly formed ECDE programme is to promote access to sustainable quality, comprehensive early childhood development and education for all children, from birth to the first years of compulsory education, in a manner that places a premium on eliminating inequalities in current access for the most marginalized and vulnerable children. Implementation of the strategy uses the modalities like sustainable grant-making, capacity-building, networking and sustainable facilitation of new ideas, and advocacy, campaigning, research and the production of strategic information. Although the importance and value of education in the early years of life have been acknowledged for more than 2,000 years (Carter, 1987), relatively recent factors have brought pre-primary education to the forefront of public awareness but quality sustainability has been suffering. It is this discrepancy that makes this study of importance to us.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite increased advocacy in support of pre-primary education, access to sustainable quality of academic education in pre-primary education in most nations of the world has been described to be in tatters in public schools characterized by inadequate physical infrastructure and government strategies to support the delivery of services (UNESCO, 2010). Kenya has not been an exception either. Recent studies done in the country show that access to sustainable and quality of academic in pre-primary education in the country is characterized by inadequate teaching /Learning materials, ECDE centers, lack of trained teachers (MOEST POLICY, 2006). As a result, most pupils are not able to read, identify letters and write after going through the pre-school course. Although
studies have been done on factors influencing quality of academic in public pre-primary schools none has focused on the teachers characteristics and learning environment on the quality of academic education in public pre-primary education (MOEST POLICY-2006). In Lower Yatta most of the public ECD schools are in pathetic conditions. Children cannot read or write even after going through pre-school course. This study will embark on establishing factors influencing the quality academic education in pre-primary schools in Lower Yatta District.

1.3 The purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to establish factors influencing the quality of academic education in pre-primary schools in Lower Yatta District focusing on teaching /learning resources, learning environment and teachers characteristics.

1.4 Objectives of the study.

The study was guided by the following objectives

1. To establish the influence of availability of Teaching / learning resources on the quality of academic education in Pre-primary schools in Lower Yatta District.

2. To establish the extent to which the learning environment influences the quality of academic education in Pre-primary schools.

3. To establish the influence of teachers’ characteristics on the quality of academic education in Pre-primary schools.
1.5 Research questions.

The study sought to answer the following questions;

1. To what extent does availability of T/L resources influence the quality of academic education in Pre-primary schools?

2. In what ways does the learning environment influence the quality of academic in Pre-primary schools?

3. To what extent does the teachers’ characteristics influence the quality academic education in Pre-primary schools?

1.6 The hypotheses of the study

1. \( H_0 \): There is no significant relationship between availability of T/L resources and the quality of academic education in Pre-primary schools in Lower Yatta District.

\( H_1 \): There is a significant relationship between availability of T/L resources and the quality of academic education in Pre-primary schools in Lower Yatta District.

2. \( H_0 \): There is no significant relationship between learning environment and the quality of academic education in Pre-primary schools in Lower Yatta District.

\( H_1 \): There is a significant relationship between learning environment and the quality of academic education in Pre-primary schools in Lower Yatta District.

3. \( H_0 \): There is no significant relationship between teacher’s characteristics and the quality of academic education in Pre-primary schools in Lower Yatta District.

\( H_1 \): There is a significant relationship between teacher’s characteristics and the quality of academic education in Pre-primary schools in Lower Yatta District.
1.7 Significance of the study

The study was important in providing the education policy makers with relevant basis for prioritizing pre-primary programmes and to allocate adequate resources to pre-primary programmes especially to improve the quality of academic education in pre-primary schools. The study was important in challenging the school community to take the ECDE programs serious and co-own the programs in providing the best learning environment for quality of academic education. The study was also expected to highlight the importance and role of teachers’ characteristics on the quality of academic education in pre-primary schools.

1.8 Limitations of the study.

The researcher had the challenge of time; the researcher overcame this challenge by making prior arrangement with the respondents. The researcher was also limited by resources; the researcher overcame the challenge by conducting the research only in one District.

1.9 Delimitation of the study

There are many factors that influence the quality of academic education in pre-primary schools like the ownership of the institutions, but this study was restricted to only three factors namely availability of teaching/learning resources, learning environment and teachers’ characteristics. Lower Yatta District has three divisions; Kwa-vonza, Yatta and Kanyangi, the study was carried out in all the divisions.
1.10 Basic assumptions of the study

The study made the following assumptions;

The randomly selected sample will adequately represent the target population, the responses given by respondents are a true reflection of the factors that influence the quality of academic education in pre-primary schools in Lower Yatta District, the study assumed that the results can be generalized to represent the situation in the entire Kitui County and the researcher had no control over the responses by the respondents.

1.11 Definitions of significant terms

**ECD center**: This is a pre-primary education center that caters for children aged 4 - 5 years.

**Parents**: Refer to parents with children in pre-primary educations classes.

**Pre- primary education**: Refer to education provided to children aged between 4 – 5 years in pre- primary I and pre- primary II classes.

**Public school**: An ECD centre that is established by the community, an organization or attached to a public school which is not for profit making.

**Private school**: An ECD centre that is established by an individual, community an organization or attached to a private primary school which is made for profit making through paying fees.

**Quality**: Refer to pre- primary education quality standards as provided in the Kenya National ECD Service Standard Guideline of 2006
which are measured by reading, identifying numbers, identifying letters, sorting and grouping according to shape, colour, size etc.

T/L: Teaching /learning.

### 1.12 Organization of the study

The study is organized into five chapters.

Chapter one is concerned with background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, hypothesis of the study, significance of the study, limitations and delimitations of the study, basic assumptions and finally the definitions of the basic terms. Chapter two comprises of literature review related to the study topic, that is the influence of availability of T/L resources on the quality academic education in pre-primary schools, influence of the learning environment on the quality academic education in Pre-primary schools and influence of teachers’ characteristics on the quality academic education in Pre-primary schools.

Chapter three deals with research methodology. It was divided into the following subsections; research design, target population, sample and sampling techniques, research instruments, validity of instruments, reliability of instruments, data collection procedure, data analysis techniques, ethical considerations and operational definition of variables, Chapter four addresses data analysis, presentation, interpretation and discussion of the findings while chapter five address the summary of the findings, conclusions, recommendations from the study and suggestions for further research.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter endeavors to review the related literature on those factors that influence the quality of academic education in pre-primary schools such as The influence of learning and teaching resources on the quality of academic education in pre-primary schools, the influence of the learning environment on the quality of academic education in pre-primary schools, the teachers characteristics on the quality of academic education in pre-primary schools.

2.2 The influence of learning and teaching resources on the quality of academic education in Pre-primary Schools.

In recent years, there has been increasing concern that public education is adequately preparing children for the challenges of the future. This concern has been accompanied by a push to return to “the basics” in education. Some have interpreted this to include young children, with the idea that an earlier introduction to academics will result in better prepared and educated children. Early childhood professionals and researchers have expressed grave apprehensions about this trend apply termed hot housing, which pushes pre-scholars into inappropriate task for which they are not developmentally ready. Young children can learn a lot of material in a mechanistic, vote manner, but if these experiences are meaningless, such information has little relevance (Sigel, 1987). Since the society is dynamic there is need to adopt the technological changes and improve the current teaching and learning resources so as to improve the quality of education. I therefore
wish to bridge the gap between old teaching and learning material and bring in new teaching and learning materials which embraces the new technology of ICT integration in learning.

Although many factors contribute to the quality of an early childhood program, perhaps the most important factor on which quality depends on is the interaction between the adults and the children. In a good program, adults are involved with children, who are mostly teachers, are nurturing and responsive, there is ample verbal exchange, and interactions which aim to teach, not just to control (Clake, 1987). A wonderful physical facility, an exemplary child – adult ratio, and a favorable group size would all be negated by uncaring and unresponsive child – adult interaction. It is after all, the teachers who determine the tone and the character in effect, the quality of a program.

2.3 The influence of the learning environment on the quality of academic education in Pre-primary Schools.

The environment we live affects our moods, ability to form relationships, effectiveness in work or play as well as our health. In addition, the early childhood group environment has a very crucial role in children’s learning and development for two important reasons, Pearson (2010). The pre-primary education quality features can be categorized into the structural, process and outcome features (Mishra, 2009; UNESCO, 2005; Young, 2002) which have to be based in an environment. The structural features of the program are the basic set up of the program that does not change from time to time. They include size of the group and the ratio of the number of children to adults; composition of the group and
safety factors; the nature of the physical faculties; Staff characteristics (education and training); the program director or supervisor and the support he or she provides (Mishra, 2009). This definitely highlights the importance of the environment in providing teaching and learning resources (Bullard 2005).

According to the constructivism theory of learning, human beings learn through establishing meaning in their present knowledge structures. According to proponents of this theory, children learn by the process of assimilation and accommodation. Accommodation refers to the process by which failure leads to further learning; where a new experience that is contrary to one's expectations causes one to change their mental representations. On the other hand, assimilation is the process by which a new experience is integrated into an existing framework. The latter occurs in instances where the nature of one's perception of the world is the same as the experiences they go through. Consequently, one cannot ignore the effect that the environment has on a particular individual because it is the basis upon which one gains new experiences. (Piaget, 1950).

Different environments may boost or distract children from learning. For instance, a child's environment is likely to influence his/her access to resources and also their learning style. Families play a great role in the learning process because if they do not perform their functions of taking care of the environment, then children can develop low esteem and this impedes learning. Other issues such as the design of the classroom come into play especially when considering online versus traditional learning (Wood, 1998). According to research, children demonstrate higher cognitive skill levels and greater
social competence in schools that are safe and orderly, contain a wide variety of stimulating equipment and materials and are organized into learning centers on the basis of similar materials and activities when compared to children in programs that lack these features. This study is expected to focus on how the environment can be improved so as to improve the quality of education in pre-schools.

A child-oriented environment conveys to children that this place is meant for them. There are interesting and worthwhile things to do in this particular environment, also requires fewer restrictions and prohibitions because it is fashioned specifically for children. This contributes towards a positive and pleasant atmosphere. A good environment conveys to children that this is a good place to be, that people here care about them, that they are able to satisfy their desire to learn and their innate curiosity, and that it is safe to try without fear of failure (Hoover, 2005). With increasing numbers of children spending many hours per day in child care, parents and teachers are, more than ever, partners in many aspects of child rearing and socialization. Studies have shown that the children benefit when parents and the early childhood staff share a common commitment to the best interests of the children. Communicate openly and have mutual respect. However, if there is lack of communication such that parents do not know what happened at school and teachers are not informed of significant events in the child’s home life; there is lack of continuity for the child (Hoover, 2005).

Many studies done in the country show that the system in most public schools is characterized by inadequate learning environment for children in terms of higher teacher
pupil ratio and untrained teacher levels; inadequate provision of physical facilities, learning materials, health and nutrition services; poor access for 3 – 6 year in extreme poverty areas, inadequate training of teachers and high turnover rate for teachers.

Conceptualization of service quality in pre-primary education has been varied since its outcome is hard to measure (Mishra, 2009). However, many researchers have tended to link quality in these programs to the features of the program that promotes children holistic development and effective learning (BVLF, 1994)

With increasing numbers of children spending many hours per day in child care centre, parents and teachers are, more than ever, partners in many aspects of child rearing and socialization. Studies have shown that the children benefit when parents and the childhood staff share a common communicate openly and have mutual respect. However, if there is a lack of communication so that parent do not know what happened at school and teachers are not know what happened at school and teachers are not informed at significant events in the child. According to the national early childhood development frame work it clearly spells out the role of parents, other care givers and the larger community (Phillipsen, 1997).

Kohl, (2000) show divorce is the most common but only one way a traditional family might develop into a single-parent family. Registered marriages are declining in the United States, but separations and divorces remain very high. Half of all marriages are expected to end in divorce. Then again, not all people who separate actually file for divorce. A more representative statistic might be, approximately 64% of the marriages
was disrupted. Whether the reason is divorce or something else (Kohl, 2000) reminds us that 50% of the country’s children will live in a single-parent home by the year 2001. He further argued that Children from divorced families are more likely to have difficulties with school performance, delinquency, and disruptions in peer relationships, precocious sexual behavior and substance abuse. The study assumes that children from broken families can still do well in the pre-schools if the environment at school is made conducive for learning.

2.4 The influence of teachers’ characteristics on the quality of academic education in Pre-primary schools.

A nurturing well trained and consistent staff is an asset to a quality program, but a reciprocal concern for the well-being of the staff also is needed. Working with young children is a demanding, challenging job. Thus, it is in the best interests of the children, the families, and the employer if staff members receive appropriate pay and benefits and in a satisfying environment. In such a setting, the needs of the staff are seriously considered, an atmosphere of camaraderie is fostered, autonomy is encouraged in planning an appropriate program for children, and thus physical environment includes space for adults (Jorde, 1988). This is because the when teachers are motivated, the delivery is improved hence improving the quality of pre-school education.

Research has shown that training of Early Childhood teachers have an important variable to the quality of early childhood programs. Such teachers engaged in more interactions with the children, and the children showed greater social cognitive abilities compared to
those whose teachers lacked such training. These findings particularly, in relation to children’s more advanced cognitive and language ability, have been supported in other research (Burchinal, Roberts, Nabors, & Bryant, 1996; Phillipsen, Burchinal, Howes & Cryer, 1997). In addition, teachers with early childhood training were rated as more positive and less punitive, employing a less authoritarian style of interaction with the children. Many young children spend the bulk of their waking hours in child care with adults other than their parents. One important task in the early years is forming a secure attachment relationship to adults.

Although primary attachment is with parents, research has shown that young children become attached to their caregivers. But when children lose an adult with whom they have formed such an attachment, the loss can be profound (Essa, Favre, Thweatt, & Waugh, 1999). There is therefore a need to have trusted caregivers who are capable of mentoring the children in the right direction. One study found that there is less child-adult interaction in centers with a high teacher-turnover rate (Phillips, Scarr, & MC Cartney, 1987). This is not surprising when interaction is dependent in part on establishing a relationship, something that takes time to develop. Another study (Howes & Hanitton, 1993) found toddlers who experienced changes in their primary teachers were more aggressive as four year olds. Similarly, McCarteney and her co-researchers (1997) found out that children who experience more changes in caregivers during the first year had more behaviour problems as pre scholars. The effects of stable caregivers early in life were still evident when the children supported the importance of a stable, secure relationship between young children and their caregivers.
It has been generally assumed that when caregivers are responsible for large numbers of children, the quality of care is adversely affected. A number of studies have addressed this assumption and found that the ratio significantly affects children’s behavior and child–adult interaction (Herburn & Howels, 1996; Howes, 1997). For instance, when there are larger numbers of children per adult, there is less verbal interaction among adults and children than when the child-adult ratio is lower. Teachers in classrooms with lower ratios were more sensitive and responsive to the children than teachers who had more children in their care (Howes, 1997). A significant factor in providing quality care has to do with giving children individualized attention, confirming their unique identity and worth as individuals. When an adult is responsible for a large number of children, that adult is less able to provide such attention and is more concerned instead with controlling and managing the group. Child-adult ratio is one variable that interacts with other factors, such as group size and teacher qualifications.
2.5 Conceptual framework
The study problem was conceptualized as the interrelationships of study variables in Figure

**Independent variables**

**Teaching resources/ Learning resources**
- Improvised materials
- Purchased materials
- Donated materials

**Teachers’ characteristic**
- Age
- Gender
- Level of education
- Marital status

**Environmental factors**
- School environment
- Home environment
- Social environment

**Moderating variable**
- Gender
- Work place
- Remoteness

**Intervening variable**

**Dependent**
- Quality of academic in Pre-school education
  - Ability to read
  - Ability to write letters and numbers.
  - Ability to sort and group
- Government policy
  - Employment
  - Remuneration
  - Government sponsorship

Figure 1. Conceptual framework.
CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology that was used in carrying out the study. The chapter consists of the research design, target population, sampling procedures and sample size, research instruments, validity and reliability of the instruments, data collection procedures, data analysis, ethical issues and Operationalization of the study variables.

3.2 Research design

Kerlinge, (1964) defines a research design as “the plan, structure and strategy of investigation conceived so as to meet the study objectives and to control variance.” This research adopted a descriptive survey design to describe the state factors that influence the quality of education in public pre-primary schools. This design was aimed at collecting information from teachers, on their opinion on their quality of academic education in pre-primary schools in Lower Yatta District. It allowed the researcher to gather data, summarize, analyze, present and interpret for the purpose of clarification.

3.3 Target Population

According to Borg and Gall (1989) target population describes all members of real or hypothetical set of people, events and objects. The target population was 125 ECD teachers, 125 head teachers and 125 children from 125 public primary schools in Lower Yatta District in Kitui County (Lower Yatta DEOs report, 2014)
3.4 Sample size and sampling procedure

Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) defines sample as a smaller group obtained from the population. This sample is representative of the whole population with the relevant characteristics. Orodho (2005) defines sample as a small portion of the target population. He further to defined sampling as a means of selecting a given number of subjects from a defined population as representative of that population. The minimum sample for a survey of a small population is 20% and that of a large population is 10% (Gay, 1992). In this study the researcher sampled 20% of the population 25 ECD teachers and 25 head teachers from 25 public primary schools in Lower Yatta District in Kitui County. The researcher also sampled 50% of the 25 public pre-school making a sample of 12 schools where the researcher visited twelve schools and administered a tool test for three children from each school making a total of thirty six children. This research adopted stratified sampling.

3.5 Research instruments

The study used a checklist for the children and questionnaires for head teachers and ECD teachers. According to Moore (1983), questionnaires give detailed answers to complex problems and they are most effective for use in surveys. Mugenda & Mugenda (1999) observes that the use of questionnaire is a popular method for data collection in education because of the relative ease and cost effectiveness with which they are constructed and administered to large samples. Questionnaire gives a relatively objective data and enriches them to the survey research design of this kind. The questionnaires contained different sections. Section A was bio-data, section B was to gather information about
influence of teaching and learning materials on quality of ECD education, section C gathered information on influence of environment on quality of ECD education, and section D gathered information on influence of teacher characteristics on quality of ECD education.

### 3.6 Validity of the instrument.

Validity refers to the appropriateness meaningfulness of inference. Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) defines validity as the accuracy, meaningfulness and inferences which are based on the research results. Therefore, content validity of the instruments was determined by experts in research methodology from the School of Continuing and Distance Education of the University of Nairobi. The experts advised on the questionnaire and the questionnaires open-ended items were corrected. The corrections on the identified items were incorporated into the instruments so as to increase its content validity. Finally the validity of the questionnaires’ open-ended items was ascertained by lecturers from the School of Continuing and Distance Education of the University of Nairobi.

### 3.7 Reliability of the instruments.

In research the term liability means “repeatability “of “consistency” of measures Kasomo (2006). Reliability measures the stability of research instruments across two or more attempts. In this study, testing for the reliability of the questionnaire was done using the split-half method. In piloting process split half method was used by administering the questionnaires closed-ended items which was subjected to a pilot study utilizing a sample
of four randomly selected respondents. The data values collected were operationalized and numerical scores was split in two using old numbers versus even number items process to get two sets of values which was correlated using spearman’s correlation coefficient. A correlation coefficient of at least 0.85 was obtained which was sufficient enough for these questionnaires to have high pre-test reliability.

3.8 Data Collection Procedure

The researcher obtained a permit from the National Council for Sciences and technology in order to be allowed to collect data. A copy of the permit was submitted to the District Education officer in Lower Yatta District. The researcher pre-visited 25 selected schools to make prior arrangement and established a good rapport with the head teachers before actual data collection date. The data was collected using questionnaires and a checklist. The questionnaires were personally administered by the researcher and a checklist administered as well to the children. The questionnaires were filled in by the respective respondents and the checklist was administered by the researcher to the children. The researcher then collected the filled questionnaires.

3.9 Data Analysis techniques

The data analysis involved editing, coding, classification and tabulation of the data collected. The data collected from the respondents was summarized and tabulated. The data was further analyzed using descriptive as well as inferential analysis procedures. Frequencies, percentages and means were calculated and presented in tables while the inferential statistical analysis was carried out using Pearson Correlation Coefficient. The
data collected was analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative inferential statistical tools and the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software as analytical tools. Regression analysis was used as statistical tool.

3.10 Ethical Considerations
Proper care was taken to ensure that all information from the respondents was treated with maximum confidentiality. To increase the degree of confidence among the respondents, no names or personal identification details was required for the purpose of filling in the questionnaires. The sources of data and other information for literature review were acknowledged.

3.11 Operational definition of variables
To achieve the objectives of the study the researcher assessed the factors that influence the quality of academic education in pre-primary schools. The design selected was aimed at collecting information from teachers, on their opinion on the quality of academic education in pre-schools education in Lower Yatta District. The dependent variable was: The quality of academic education in pre-primary schools and the independent variables were: The availability of teaching /learning resources, learning environment and teachers characteristics. The operationalization of the variables was as given in Table 3.1.
Table 3.1: Operationalization of the study variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Dependent</th>
<th>Measurements</th>
<th>Level of scale</th>
<th>Tools of analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To determine the influence of availability of T/L resources on the quality of academic education in Pre-primary Schools</td>
<td>Teaching and learning materials</td>
<td>- Teacher-made materials. - Purchased materials - Donated materials.</td>
<td>Quality of academic education in pre-school schools.</td>
<td>Number of items Source of T/L material</td>
<td>Nominal</td>
<td>- tables. - mean scores - Correlation - Anova</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To establish the extent to which the learning environment influences the quality of academic education in Pre-primary schools</td>
<td>Learning environment</td>
<td>- School environment - Home environment - Social environment</td>
<td>Quality of academic education in pre-school schools.</td>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>ordinal</td>
<td>- tables. - mean scores - Correlation - Anova</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To establish the teachers characteristics on the quality of academic education in Pre-primary schools</td>
<td>Teachers characteristics</td>
<td>- age. - gender - marital status. - Level of education.</td>
<td>Quality of academic education in pre-school schools.</td>
<td>- Grades Promotions Salary increment</td>
<td>Nominal</td>
<td>- tables. - mean scores - Correlation - Anova</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction.
The purpose of this study was to establish factors influencing the quality of academic education in pre-primary schools in Lower Yatta District focusing on teaching/learning resources, learning environment and teachers characteristics. Data was collected using the questionnaires as the main instruments. The questionnaires were administered to 25 ECD teachers and 25 Head teachers. The data collected was analyzed using SPSS software. The analysis method used was descriptive method as well as inferential method.

4.2 Questionnaire return rate.
Questionnaire return rate is the proportion of the sample that participated in the survey and returned their questionnaires as intended by the researcher. The questionnaires were administered to a sample of 25 ECD teachers and 25 head teachers from 25 public primary schools in Lower Yatta District in Kitui County. All (100%) of the questionnaires were returned by the respondents under this study. This implies a good follow up was done for the questionnaires and therefore gave good results.
4.3 Gender of respondents
The respondents were asked to indicate their gender with the aim of establishing whether the study was gender sensitive and to establish if gender influenced quality of academic education in pre-primary schools. The results are shown in Table 4.1

Table 4.1: Distribution of respondents by gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>45.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>55.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1 shows that slightly above half (55%) of the respondents were male while (45%) were female. This shows that there was a gender balance in the distribution of respondents and is therefore likely to get significant results.

4.4 Age bracket of respondents
The researcher sought to establish the age distribution for the respondents. The findings are summarized in Table 4.2


Table 4.2 Age distribution of respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age in years</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 35</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>22.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 – 40</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41 – 45</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 45</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>50</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2 revealed that half of the respondents (50%) were 35-40 years of age followed by those aged less than 35 years with 22% followed by those aged 41-45 at 18%. The least were those who are above 45 years with 10%.

4.5 Academic qualification for the head teachers

The researcher sought to investigate the academic qualification for head teachers. The findings are summarized in Table 4.3

Table 4.3 Head teacher’s academic qualification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Certificate</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>46.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>32.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.ED</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>50</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.3 revealed that almost half of the respondents (46%) had a certificate as their highest academic qualification, followed by 32 percent with a diploma. However 14 percent had B.ED and 8 percent had Masters degree. This did not influence the results of the study.

4.6 Availability of Teaching / learning resources on the quality of academic education in Pre-primary schools in Lower Yatta District.

The first objective for this study was to establish the influence of availability of Teaching/Learning on the quality of academic education in Lower Yatta District. To achieve this objective, the respondents were asked to indicate the teaching and learning materials available in their schools. The results were shown in the Table 4.4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.4 Teaching learning materials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puzzle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flash cards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Table 4.4, majority of the respondents (78%) had teaching and learning materials in their schools. However there was a significant difference among the
materials available with majority (96%) of schools having charts. This might be because charts are easy to make and might not have a big financial implication. It was however noticed that few schools had puzzles (66%). This is because they are hard to make and complicated. Further the researcher tested a hypothesis to establish the strength of the relationship between availability of teaching and learning materials and quality of academic education.

H₀: There is no significant relationship between availability of T/L resources and the quality of education in Pre-primary schools in Lower Yatta District.

H₁: There is a significant relationship between availability of T/L resources and the quality of academic education in Pre-primary schools in Lower Yatta District.

The results are presented in Table 4.5.

**Table 4.5 Relationship between availability of T/L materials and quality of education.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Availability of T/L</th>
<th>Quality of education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Availability of T/L</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of education</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.5 revealed that there existed a strong positive correlation \((r = +0.75)\) between availability of T/L resources and the quality of education. We do therefore reject the hypothesis and conclude that there is significant relationship between availability of T/L resources and the quality of education. This means the more the T/L material the better the quality of education.

The study first established that majority of the respondents (78%) had teaching and learning materials in their schools and there is significant relationship \((r = 0.75)\) between availability of teaching/learning resources and the quality of education. This means the more the T/L material the better the quality of education. This agrees with Sigel, (1987) who argued that young children can learn a lot by use of T/L materials. He further argued that, since the society is dynamic there is need to adopt the technological changes and improve the current teaching and learning resources so as to improve the quality of education. This is because the materials the school has is likely to influence the quality of academic education.

4.7 Learning environment and the quality of academic education in Pre-primary schools.

The second objective for this was to establish the extent to which the learning environment influences the quality of academic education in Pre-primary schools. To achieve this objective, the respondents were to show their rating choice using a 5-point likert rating scale as from: (1-2-3-4-5) given as: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), undecided (U), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) to indicate their level of
agreement and/or disagreement with the statements. The results are shown in the Table 4.6.

**Table 4.6: Learning environment and the quality of academic education in Pre-primary schools**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Parental involvement in children’s learning activities positively influences their levels of achievement</th>
<th>56</th>
<th>22</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>22</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>100</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b)</td>
<td>Children make more gains in integrated settings and nursery schools where there are more highly qualified staff.</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c)</td>
<td>Instructive learning environments and ‘sustained shared thinking’ improves the quality of learning in ECDs. ‘quality’.</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d)</td>
<td>Increased parent-school communications improves children performance.</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e)</td>
<td>High parental aspirations for their children tend to positively influence children’s’ levels of performance.</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean responses</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.6 revealed that (56%) of the respondents strongly agreed that parental involvement in children’s learning activities influences their levels of achievement, 22% agreed while 22% disagreed. It also revealed that 50% of respondents strongly agreed that children make more gains in intergraded settings and nursery schools where there are more highly qualified staff, 44% only agreed while 6% disagreed. Further 50% respondents strongly agreed with the statement that instructive learning environments and sustained shared thinking improves that quality of learning in ECDs while 25% agreed, 6% were neutral while 9% strongly disagreed.

88% of the respondents strongly agreed that increased pre-school communications improves children performance and high parental aspirations for their children tend to positively influence children’s levels of performance while 12% agreed.

To establish whether there is significant relationship between learning environment and the quality of academic education in Pre-primary schools the researcher tested the hypotheses below.

\( H_0: \) There is no significant relationship between learning environment and the quality of academic education in Pre-primary schools

\( H_1: \) There is significant relationship learning environment and the quality of academic education in Pre-primary schools.

The results are presented in Table 4.7
Table 4.7: Relationship between learning environment and quality of academic education.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Learning environment</th>
<th>Quality of education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning environment</strong></td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>0.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quality of education</strong></td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>0.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Table 4.7 the correlation coefficient for the relationship between learning environment and the quality of academic education in Pre-primary schools is +0.70. This correlation coefficient is very high implying that there is a strong positive relationship between learning environment and the quality of academic education in Pre-primary schools. The relationship is significant (p<0.05), therefore the hypothesis was rejected and conclusion made that there is a significant relationship between learning environment and the quality of academic education in pre-primary schools.

The study established that, there is a strong positive relationship between learning environment and the quality of academic education in pre-primary schools. This agrees with Pearson, (2010, who argued that the environment we are in affects our moods, ability to form relationships, effectiveness in work or play as well as our health. In addition, the early childhood group environment has a very crucial role in children’s learning and development for two important reasons. Consequently, one cannot ignore the effect that
the environment has on a particular individual because it is the basis upon which one gains new experiences. (Piaget, 1950). Different environments may boost or distract students from learning. For instance, a child's environment is likely to influence their access to resources and also their learning style. Families play a great role in the learning process because if they do not perform their functions of taking care of the environment, then children can develop low esteem and this impedes learning.

4.8 Teachers’ characteristics and the quality of academic education in Pre-primary schools
The third objective for this study was to establish the influence of teachers’ characteristics on the quality of academic education in Pre-primary schools. To achieve this objective, respondents were required to show their rating choice using a 5-point likert rating scale as from: (1-2-3-4-5) given as: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), undecided (U), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) to indicate their level of agreement and/or disagreement with the statements. The results are shown in Table 4.8
Table 4.8: Teachers’ characteristics and the quality of academic education in Pre-primary schools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>1%</th>
<th>2%</th>
<th>3%</th>
<th>4%</th>
<th>5%</th>
<th>Total %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) A well trained teacher is important to a quality academic ECD education program.</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) There is less child – adult interaction in centers with a high teacher – turnover rate</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Teachers in classrooms with lower ratios are more sensitive and responsive to the children</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Parents and teachers are ideally the most important people in pre-school education</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.8 revealed that slightly above half (60%) of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement that a well trained teacher is important to quality academic ECD education program with only 30% agreeing, however 10% disagreed. Also (84%) of the respondents strongly agreed that there is less child-adult interaction in centers with high teacher turn-over rate while 8% disagreed. It was agreed that 70% of the respondents strongly agreed that teachers in classrooms with lower ratios are more sensitive and responsive to the children while 30% only agreed. Also 85% of the respondents strongly agreed that position/parents and teachers are ideally the most important people in pre-school education while 15% disagreed. The researcher then tested the hypothesis to
establish the teachers’ characteristics and academic education quality. The hypothesis were;

\( H_0 \): There is no significant relationship between teachers’ characteristics and the quality of academic education in strategies

\( H_1 \): There is significant relationship between teachers’ characteristics and the quality of academic education. The results are presented in Table 4.9

**Table 4.9 Relationship between learning teacher’s characteristics and quality of education.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Teachers’ characteristics</th>
<th>Quality of education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers’ characteristics</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>0.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of education</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>0.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Table 4.9 the correlation coefficient for the relationship between teachers’ characteristics and the quality of academic education in pre-primary schools is +0.78. This is because there was a strong positive relationship between teachers’ characteristics and the quality of academic education. Also there is a significant relationship \( p<0.05 \) between teachers’ characteristics and the quality of academic education. The hypothesis was therefore rejected and conclusion made that there is a significant relationship between teacher’s characteristics and the academic education.
4.9 Observation checklist for nursery ECD children

The researcher used a checklist to test the academic abilities of the ECD children. The results are presented in the Table 4.10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Able %</th>
<th>Not Able %</th>
<th>Total %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Say his/her name</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read three letter words</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write letters from A-Z</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write numbers from 1-20</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sort and group according to colour, shape and size.</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mean total</strong></td>
<td><strong>72</strong></td>
<td><strong>28</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.10 revealed that, on average 72 percent of the children interviewed were able to say their names, read three letter words, written A-Z and 1-20 and sort and group according to color, shape and size. However there was a significant difference between those who are able with ability to say name leading with 92% followed by writing from 1-20 with 72 percent. Also there seemed to be a problem in reading three letter words with 50% not able to read. This shows clearly that there was a problem that needed to be addressed in Lower Yatta District pre-schools.
The study established that there is positive relationship \((r = 0.78)\) between teachers’ characteristics and the quality of academic education. This agrees with Howes & Cryer, (1997). Who argued that training of Early Childhood teachers has an important variable to the quality of early childhood programmes. Such teachers engaged in more interactions with the children, and the children showed greater social cognitive abilities compared to those whose teachers lacked such training. These findings particularly, in relation to children’s more advanced cognitive and language ability, have been supported in other research. In addition, teachers with early childhood training were rated as more positive and less punitive, employing a less authoritarian style of interaction with the children (Arnett, 1987). Many young children spend the bulk of their waking hours in child care with adults other than their parents. One important task in the early years is forming a secure attachment relationship to adults.
CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Introduction
This chapter discusses summary of the findings, conclusions, recommendations, and suggestions for further research following research objectives.

5.2 Summary of the findings
The purpose of this study is to establish factors influencing the quality of academic education in pre-primary schools in Lower Yatta District focusing on teaching/learning resources, learning environment and teachers characteristics. Data was collected using the questionnaires as the main instruments. The questionnaires were administered to 25 ECD teachers and 25 head teachers and a checklist for 36 children. The data collected were analyzed using SPSS software. The analysis method used was descriptive method as well as inferential method.

The first objective for this study was to establish the influence of availability of teaching/learning resources on the quality of academic education in pre-primary schools in Lower Yatta District. It was established that majority of the respondents (78%) had teaching and learning materials in their schools while 22% had no teaching/learning materials. These included activity books, puzzles, charts and flash cards.
It was also revealed that there is significant relationship \((r = 0.75)\) between availability of T/L resources and the quality of education. This means the more the T/L materials the better the quality of academic education.

The second objective for this was to establish the extent to which the learning environment influences the quality of academic education in Pre-primary schools. It was established that majority (88%) of the respondents strongly agreed with the statements; increased parent-school communications improves children parental involvement in children’s learning activities positively influences their levels of achievement and High parental aspirations for their children tend to positively influence children’s’ levels of performance. It was also established that there is significant relationship between learning environment and the quality of academic education in pre-primary schools \((r = 0.70)\).

The third objective for this study was to establish the influence of teachers’ characteristics on the quality of academic education in Pre-primary schools. It was established that 84 percent of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement that there is less child – adult interaction in centers with a high teacher – turnover rate and 60 percent strongly agreed that a well trained teacher is important to a quality of academic ECD education program with 30 only agreeing while 10% did not agree. Further the study established that there is significant relationship \((r=0.78)\) between teachers’ characteristics and the quality of academic education.
5.3 Conclusions from the study

From the findings of this study the researcher made the following conclusions: first, most of the schools had teaching and learning materials in their schools. These included activity books, puzzles, charts and flash cards and that there is positive relationship between availability of T/L resources and the quality of academic education. This means the more the T/L material the better the quality of education.

Secondly, there is significant relationship between learning environment and the quality of academic education in Pre-primary schools. This means that the learning environment greatly influences the quality of education. Finally, there is a significant relationship between teachers’ characteristics and the quality of academic education meaning the teacher characteristics affects the academic quality of education.

5.4: Recommendations from the study

From the findings of this study, the researcher wishes to make the following recommendations;

i) The ministry of education should allocate funds for funding of pre-schools with T/L materials.

ii) The school head teachers should improve the learning environment for their schools so as to improve the quality of academic education.

iii) The DEOs office should organize in-service trainings for pre-school teachers so as to improve their teachers’ characteristics.
iv) Parents should be highly involved in the learning activities of their children so as to improve the quality of Academic education.

5.5. Suggestions for further research

The purpose of this study was to establish factors influencing the quality of academic education in pre-primary schools in Lower Yatta District focusing on availability of teaching/learning resources, learning environment and teachers characteristics. Further research can be done on:

i) The factors influencing the quality of academic education in primary schools.

ii) The factors influencing the quality of academic education in secondary schools.

iii) The influence of training on the quality of academic education in primary schools.
REFERENCES


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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Transmittal letter

UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI
P.O. BOX 30197,
NAIROBI.
9TH Feb, 2014.

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: REQUEST TO FILL QUESTIONNAIRES

I am a post graduate student in the University of Nairobi pursuing a Masters Degree in Project Planning and Management course. I am carrying out a research on the “factors influencing the quality of academic education in pre-primary schools in Lower Yatta District, Kitui County. I therefore request you to assist me in filling the questionnaires for this study. Please answer the questions as truthfully as possible.

The result of this study was used for academic purposes only. Any information collected was treated with utmost confidentiality.

Thanks in advance.

Yours Faithfully,

SALOME K. MUSAVA
Appendix II: Questionnaire for head teachers

INSTRUCTIONS

THE RESPONDENTS INSTRUCTIONS

This study intends to collect information on the factors influencing the quality of academic education in pre-primary schools in Lower Yatta District, Kitui County. The information will only be used for academic purpose and the results are expected to improve organizational performance. Please answer by filling or ticking (√) against the most appropriate/applicable response of the questionnaire items. To express opinion, use the provided space. Kindly answer the questions as honestly as possible and your responses were kept confidential. Please do not write your name or institution anywhere in the questionnaire.

SECTION A: RESPONDENTS DETAILS

1. Please indicate your Gender?
   a) Male ( )  b) Female ( )

2. Kindly tick your age bracket?
   a) Below 35 years ( )  b) 36-40 ( )  c) 40-45 ( )  d) over 45 ( )

3. What is your highest education level?
   a) Certificate ( )  b) Diploma ( )  c) Bachelors degree ( )  d) others ( )

4. Please indicate the years you have been a head teacher?
   a) 1-3 ( )  b) 4-7 ( )  c) 7-10 ( )  d) Over 10 ( )

SECTION B: The influence of learning and teaching resources on the quality of academic education in Pre-primary Schools.

5. How many children are in your ECD center?
   a) Below 10 ( )  b) 10-20 ( )  c) 21-30 ( )  d) Above 30 ( )
6. What teaching and learning resources do you use in your ECD center?

(a) Activity Books ( )
(b) Puzzle ( )
(c) Charts ( )
(d) Flash cards ( )

7. Where do you get the teaching and learning materials for your ECD class from?

(a) Parents ( )
(b) School ( )
(c) Improvising ( )

8. Do you have adequate teaching and learning materials for your ECD?

(a) Yes ( )
(b) No ( )

9. If no, how does this affect the quality of academic education in teaching and learning?

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SECTION C: The influence of the learning environment on the quality of academic education in Pre-primary schools.

10. The statements below relate to the influence of learning environment on the quality of academic education of Pre-primary education. Supplied also are five options corresponding to these statements: Strongly agree(Sa), Agree(a), Undecided(u), Disagree(d), and Strongly Disagree(sd)
FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a)</td>
<td>Parental involvement in children’s learning activities positively influences their levels of achievement</td>
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<td>b)</td>
<td>Children make more gains in integrated settings and nursery schools where there are more highly qualified staff.</td>
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<td>c)</td>
<td>Instructive learning environments and ‘sustained shared thinking’ improves the quality of learning in ECDs. ‘quality’</td>
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<td>d)</td>
<td>Increased parent-school communications improves children performance.</td>
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<td>e)</td>
<td>High parental aspirations for their children tend to positively influence children’s’ levels of performance.</td>
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SECTION D: The influence of teachers’ characteristics on the quality of academic education in Pre-primary schools.

11. Has the ECD teacher gone through any training in the last one year?

   (a) Yes ( )
   (b) No ( )

12. If yes, which training?
   -

13. The statements below relate to the influence of teachers characteristics on the quality of academic education in Pre-primary Schools. Supplied also are five options corresponding to these statements: Strongly agree(sa) Agree(a) Undecided(u) Disagree(d), and Strongly Disagree(sd).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher characteristics</th>
<th>Sa</th>
<th>a</th>
<th>u</th>
<th>d</th>
<th>sd</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) A well trained teacher is important to a quality academic ECD education program.</td>
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<td>b) There is less child – adult interaction in centers with a high teacher – turnover rate</td>
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<tr>
<td>c) Parents and teachers are ideally the most important people in pre-school education</td>
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<td>d) Teachers in classrooms with lower ratios are more sensitive and responsive to the children</td>
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Appendix III: Questionnaire for ECD teachers

INSTRUCTIONS

SECTION THE RESPONDENTS INSTRUCTIONS
This questionnaire is designed to collect information on the factors influencing the quality of academic education in pre-primary schools in Lower Yatta District, Kitui County. The information will only be used for academic purpose and the results are expected to improve organizational performance. Please answer by filling or ticking (✓) against the most appropriate/applicable response of the questionnaire items. To express opinion, use the provided space. Kindly answer the questions as honestly as possible and your responses will be kept confidential. Please do not write your name or institution anywhere in the questionnaire.

A: RESPONDENTS DETAILS
1. kindly indicate your gender?
   a) Male ( )        b) Female ( )

2. Please tick your age brackets?
   a) Below 20 years ( )    b) 20-25 ( )    c) 25-30 ( )    d) over 30 ( )

3. What is your highest academic level?
   a) Certificate ( )  b) Diploma ( )  c) Bachelors degree ( )  d) Others ( )

4. For how long have you taught in an ECD centre?
   a) 1-3 ( )  b) 4-7 ( )  c) 7-10 ( )  d) Over 10 ( )
SECTION A: The influence of learning and teaching resources on the quality of academic education in Pre-primary schools.

5. How many children are in your ECD center?
   a) Below 10 ( )   b) 10 - 20 ( )   c) 21 - 30 ( )   d) Above 30 ( )

6. What teaching and learning resources do you use in your ECD class?
   (a) Activity Books ( )
   (b) Puzzle ( )
   (c) Charts ( )
   (d) Flash cards ( )

7. Where do you get the teaching and learning material for your ECD class from?
   (a) Parents ( )
   (b) School ( )
   (c) Improvise ( )
   (d) Donations ( )

8. Do you have adequate teaching and learning materials for your ECD children?
   (a) Yes ( )
   (b) No ( )

9. If no, how does this affect the quality academic education in teaching and learning?

SECTION C: The influence of the learning environment on the quality of academic education in Pre-primary schools.

14. The statements below relate to the influence of learning environment on the quality of academic education in Pre-primary Schools. Supplied also are five options
corresponding to these statements: Strongly agree(sa), Agree(a), Undecided(u), Disagree(d), and Strongly Disagree(sd).

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEARNING ENVIRONMENT</th>
<th>SA</th>
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<th>SD</th>
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<tr>
<td>a) Parental involvement in children’s learning activities positively influences their levels of achievement</td>
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<td>d) Increased parent-school communications improves children performance.</td>
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<td>e) High parental aspirations for their children tend to positively influence students’ levels of performance.</td>
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SECTION D: The influence of teachers’ characteristics on the quality of academic education in Pre-primary schools.

15. Have you ever gone through any training in the last one year?

   (c) Yes ( )

   (d) No ( )

16. If yes, which is the training?

- __________________________________________________________________________

- __________________________________________________________________________

17. The statements below relate to the influence of teachers characteristics on the quality of academic education in Pre-primary schools. Supplied also are five options corresponding to these statements: Strongly agree(sa), Agree(a), Undecided(u), Disagree(d), and Strongly Disagree(sd).
### Teacher characteristics

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<td>A well trained teacher is important to a quality ECD education program.</td>
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<td>There is less child – adult interaction in centers with a high teacher – turnover rate</td>
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<td>h)</td>
<td>Parents and teachers are ideally the most important people in pre-school education</td>
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<td>i)</td>
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Appendix IV: observation checklist for nursery ECDE children

This observation checklist will establish the factors influencing the quality of academic education in public pre-primary schools in Lower Yatta District, Kitui County.

Kindly answer according to instructions.

Your identity was treated with a lot of confidentiality.

**OBSERVATION CHECKLIST.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Child</th>
<th>Able to say his/her name</th>
<th>Able to read three letter words</th>
<th>Able to write letters from A-Z</th>
<th>Able to write numbers from 1-20</th>
<th>Able to sort and group according to colour, shape and size.</th>
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</table>
Please read the three letter words

cat
dog       cup
cow       box
hen       red
boy       hut
Please write the alphabetical letters
Aa  Bb  Cc  Dd  Ee  Ff
Gg  Hh  Ii  Jj  Kk  Ll
Mm  Nn  Oo  Pp  Qq
Rr  Ss  Tt  Uu  Vv  Ww
Xx  Yy  Zz
Write numbers 1 - 20

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10
11 12 13 14 15 16 17
18 19  20.
Please sort according to colour and shapes.

SHAPES