DETERMINANTS OF PARENTS' INVOLVEMENT IN THEIR PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN’S EDUCATION IN GASABO DISTRICT, KIGALI CITY, RWANDA

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August, 2015
DECLARATION

I confirm that this research thesis is my original work and has not been presented in any other University/Institution. The thesis has been complemented by referenced works duly acknowledged. Where text, data, graphics, pictures or tables, have been borrowed from other works, including the internet, these are specifically accredited through referencing in accordance with anti-plagiarism regulations.

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to my husband Jean Marie Vianney Habumuremyi, my daughters Flora Ihirwe, Florentine Ishema and Honorine Uwumuremyi for their continuous moral and financial support during the study.
Acknowledgement

I thank God for giving me life throughout this research work. Without Him the work would have been impossible. I am indebted to my colleagues and immediate friends in Kenyatta University for their encouragement, support and timely advice. I am grateful to my husband Jean Marie Vianney Habumuremyi for sponsoring my studies.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ECD: Early Childhood Development

ECE: Early Childhood Education

FPE: Free Primary Education

MINEDUC: Ministry of Education (Rwanda)

NAEYC: National Association for the Education of Young Children

NCDC: National Curriculum Development Center

P I: Parents’ Involvement

Rwf: Rwandan francs

$: Dollars

SES: Socio-Economic Status

Abstract

Pre-school years present crucial opportunities for children’s growth, development and learning. Parents’ involvement in their children’s early education is thus important since they are the first educators of their children. Most importantly, parents’ involvement in the children’s education enhances their academic outcomes. The purpose of this study therefore was to explore the determinants of parents’ involvement in their pre-school children’s education as influenced by: their socio-economic status, level of education, teachers’ perception on parents’ involvement and the strategies used by schools to promote parents’ involvement in their children’s pre-school education. The study was guided by Epstein’s Model of parents’ involvement which describes six types of parents’ involvement including: parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community. The study employed the descriptive research design and specifically used the survey method. The sample size constituted 6 (30%) schools from 18 pre-schools, a similar number of head teachers, 9 (11%) teachers out of 79 of them, and 110 (10%) parents out of 1104. Data were collected using a questionnaire for parents while interview schedule was used to capture information from pre-school teachers and head teachers. Data were analyzed using qualitative and quantitative methods. Findings indicated that parents always participated in activities that required them to support their children financially. However, they moderately participated in other activities relating to education due to daily business engagements which paused a challenge to them thus limiting their capacity to involve themselves fully in their children’s education. The study thus concluded that parents’ were involved more in activities that required financial contribution to the expense of other necessities. It was therefore recommended that local leaders should increase parents’ awareness on the importance of getting involved in early childhood education and this could be done by encouraging parents to attend “Akagoroba k’Ababyeyi” literally “The evening for parents”.
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction
This chapter discusses the background to the study, statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, objectives of the study as well as research questions. The assumptions of the study, limitations and delimitations, significance of the study, theoretical framework and conceptual framework as well as operational definitions of key terms are also discussed.

1.2 Background to the Study
The first six years of life are most important for the development of human kind during which time children experience exceptionally fast growth and development in all aspects with brain growth being the most rapid (Bernndt, 2003). The pre-school years further present crucial opportunities for the development of parents’ involvement (PI) in their children’s early education. Active involvement of parents’ in their children’s learning has been shown to improve their academic outcomes (Arnold, Zeljo, Doctoroff and Ortiz, 2008; Powell, Son, File and San-Juan, 2010).

A great deal of research in the United States and other Western countries supports the notion that parents’ involvement generally has a positive effect on children's achievement. Parents who are more involved with their children's
education become knowledgeable about school goals and procedures (Hill and Taylor, 2004). In Japan, teachers make demands on parents to involve themselves at home and school in activities such as monitoring homework and attending school functions among others (Holloway, 2000). The educational systems however face the challenging task of compensating children from less disadvantaged backgrounds, for the deficit in economical, social and cultural capital they experience at home. Thus in most pre-schools, teachers have a negative attitude towards parents’ involvement in instructional activities.

Beyond the variations in assessments of parents’ involvement, there are some consistent developmental trends in the normative levels of parents’ involvement in education. In general, parents tend to be more involved in their children's education when the children are younger, especially in elementary school, as compared to middle and high school. In addition to changes across developmental stages, demographic factors shape the type, amount, and influence of parents’ involvement. The most notable are socio-economic and ethnic/cultural factors (Epstein, Sanders, Simon, Salinas and Voorhis, 2002).

According to Schulz (2005) motivation for parents’ involvement is based on parents' perceived role in their children's academic lives, a role which is culturally derived. Further, families' experiences with and perceptions of their ethnic minority status vis-à-vis the school culture and population influence their engagement with their children's schooling. Rogers (2004) affirms that
socio-economic and ethnic differences indeed do influence parents’ involvement and hence their children’s achievement.

In Africa and specifically in Ghana, a research study by Chowa, Ansong & Osei-Akoto (2012) showed that Ghanean parents often have engaged in their children’s learning in one form or another. In addition, parents’ involvement in the school environment appears to be high in school meetings, attendance, and discussing expectations with their children while others never assist their children directly with homework.

In another study in Africa and especially in Kenya, Gargiulo & Graves (1991) revealed that successful parent-teacher partnerships require a sustained mutual collaboration, support and participation of teachers and parents at home and at school in activities that can directly affect the success of children’s learning. In addition, a research conducted in Uasin Gishu District, Kenya showed that parents and teachers differed among themselves in their reports of teachers’ level of involvement reportedly ranging from low in volunteering to often in communication and learning at home (Koech, 2009). Where there was communication, Ondieki (2012) found out that it was in form of phone calls, short visits to the school or written notes to and from the teachers.

Ndegwa, Mengich, and Abidha (2007) in a study also conducted in Kenya, state that parents who did not involve themselves in their children’s education gave
several reasons for not doing so. For example they said children were not given homework by the teachers, some of the parents were not literate or the educated ones were too busy and compensated by taking their children for tuition. Furthermore a study in Kenya by Ondieki (2012) revealed that children whose parents participated in their pre-school activities performed better than those whose parents did so less frequently or rarely.

Similarly, Ndani (2008), in another study in Kenya showed that there was a significant difference in the level of participation in pre-school activities among communities in the various pre-school sponsorships. She noted that in private schools, the most common mode of participation was communication, as most of the private schools required parents to make comments and sign in their children’s homework books daily, parents suggesting places for field trips, accompanying children in trips and end of term discussion on children’s performance comprised the other activities. Furthermore, in public schools in addition to attending meetings parents were sometimes involved in deciding on matters related to providing learning materials, fees to be paid, construction of facilities and their maintenance. However all the above studies are not in Rwandan local context.

The situation in Rwanda shows that with the implementation of ECD policy, every administrative cell had to establish a nursery school (NCDC, 2006), but this was not successfully done since those schools were to be run and managed
many schools started but later, some were closed down because parents were confused about their role in the management of the schools.

Ndarihoranye & Ndayambaje (2012) studied the socio-economic problems affecting early childhood education in Gasabo District and found out that some parents were willing to participate in educating their children except that they were not able due to poverty. The same was noted in Gakenke District by Ntahombyariye & Maniragaba (2012) who noted that parents’ involvement in pre-school education was less because they were requested to pay a certain amount for tuition. Kagabo (2008) found out that in Gasabo District, parents are more involved in their children’s education at home than at school. His study however focused on lower primary school but the current one will involve pre-primary schools.

Being the first educators of their children, parents have a responsibility to support their children’s education in nursery schools. They need to contribute differently and support ECE institutions. The problem which undermines good functioning of these institutions is that parents do not know their tasks. Consequently, they do not accomplish them especially those in rural areas (NCDC, 2006). This study therefore sought to establish the factors that influence parents’ involvement in their pre-school children’s education in
Rwanda that have not been highlighted by the above studies for example parents’ involvement in pre-school education.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Parents’ involvement in their children’s education is important particularly because they are the first stakeholders to contribute to the provision of effective education for their children during the formative years. However, as Mukuna & Indoshi, (2010) reveal, the educational systems face challenges when it comes to compensating children from less disadvantaged backgrounds which further contributes to negative attitude of teachers towards parents’ involvement in instructional activities. Parents could be involved in their children’s education in school at the curriculum implementation level as they provide teaching/learning materials, interact with teachers and assist with children’s discipline. Out of school they could support them with homework. Schulz, (2005) reveals that children whose parents have better jobs, higher levels of educational attainment and those exposed to more educational as well as cultural resources at home tend to have higher levels of literacy performance.

In Rwanda and in particular Gasabo District, parents do not understand their responsibilities as they limited their participation to home related activities as Kagabo (2008) found out. This therefore as the study indicates, led to negative impact on children’s education. The above study however, focused on lower
primary education but not on pre-school education despite their vulnerability due to age.

Rwanda is further reconstructing the education sector after the 1994 genocide and there appears to be limited studies carried out on parents’ involvement in pre-schools. There was therefore a need to study parents’ involvement in their pre-school children’s education focusing on the factors that influence their participation in pre-school education in Gasabo District.

1.4 The Purpose of the Study
The purpose of this study was to establish what determines parents’ involvement in their children’s education with the view to suggest positive contributions they could make in order to further enhance their participation.

1.5 Objectives of the Study
This study sought to:

1. Find out parents’ involvement in their pre-school children’s education in Gasabo District.
2. Find out socio-economic status of parents in Gasabo District.
3. Find out parents’ level of education in Gasabo District.
4. Find out teachers’ perception on parents’ involvement in Gasabo District
5. Establish the strategies used in promoting parents’ involvement in their children’s pre-school education in Gasabo District.
1.6 Research Questions

The study sought to find answers to the following questions:

1. In what ways do parents get involved in their pre-school children’s education in Gasabo District?

2. Does socio-economic status of parents influence parents’ involvement in Gasabo District?

3. Does parents’ level of education influence parents’ involvement in Gasabo District?

4. What are the teachers’ perceptions on parents’ involvement in their pre-school children’s education in Gasabo District?

5. What are the strategies used by schools to promote parents’ involvement in their children’s pre-school education in Gasabo District?

1.7 Assumptions of the Study

The present study assumed that parents understand the benefits of ECE and that they would tell the truth with regard to their participation in their children’s pre-school education. It was also assumed that despite parents being busy they find time to be involved in their children’s pre-school activities which enhance their involvement in those schools.
1.8 Limitations of the Study

The study investigated on parents’ involvement in their pre-school children’s education. Rwanda being a young developing country in Early Childhood education, the study has been challenged by lack of previous studies in ECE in the literature. For these limitations to be overcome, the researcher had to rely mainly on studies from other countries using Kenyatta University library as a source of information for such studies.

1.9 Delimitation of the Study

The present study was confined to two sectors (Sub Districts) in Gasabo District in Kigali city, the Republic of Rwanda. The first sector was Kacyiru Sector with urban settings and hosts the District Headquarters. The second was Rusororo Sector located in the outskirts of the district on the Eastern part with rural characteristics. The focus was on the factors influencing parents’ involvement in their children’s pre-school education such as Socio-economic Status of Parents, Teachers’ Perception on Parents’ Involvement, Parents’ Level of Education, and Strategies to promote Parents’ Involvement. In terms of time, the study was bound to cover June 2013 to August/2014.

1.10 Significance of the Study

The findings from this study may inform ECD policy makers about the factors influencing parents’ involvement in sampled pre-schools of Gasabo District. It may also give an account of reasons that are behind poor contributions of
parents in pre-schools and this may be useful in planning for its improvement. The information from the present study may increase parents’ awareness about their roles and participation in their children’s education. Children also will benefit from this study when their parents become involved in their welfare. Similarly the findings of this study may enlighten pre-school teachers and administrators on various techniques used to increase parents’ involvement in pre-schools. Such information may be useful in mobilization and planning for the improvement of parents’ involvement since weaknesses will be pointed out.

1.11 Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

1.11.1 Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by Epstein’s Model of parents’ involvement (2002) as there was no appropriate theoretical framework identified suited for the study. The Model describes six types of parents’ involvement including parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community. Families and educators can work together to develop goals and establish the best possible practices that are meaningful and appropriate for both parties.

Epstein, (1995) argues that school, family and community are important spheres of influence on children’s development and that a child’s educational development is enhanced when these three environments work collaboratively toward shared goals. Further, Epstein encourages schools, home and
community through the implementation of activities across six types of involvement as mentioned above that educators can help to improve students’ achievement and experiences in school.

Epstein’s Model was selected for the study because it helped the researcher to look at different levels of parents’ involvement in children’s education. For example, socio-economic status of parents, teachers’ perception, parents’ level of education and strategies to promote parents’ involvement. In addition, the model also helped the researcher to focus on the roles of the school, teachers and administrators who were expected to provide opportunities for parents to support their children’s education.

1.11.2 Conceptual Framework

The variables under investigation were parent’s involvement in their pre-school children’s education, parents’ socio-economic status, parents’ level of education, teachers perceptions on parents’ involvement and strategies used by the school to improve parents’ involvement see figure 1.1.
Figure 1.1: Influence of Parents’ Involvement in Pre-school Education

Source: Researcher

As the conceptual diagram shows the variables under study which influenced parents’ involvement in their children’s pre-school education are socio-economic status, parents’ level of education, teachers’ perception on parents’ involvement, and strategies to promote parents’ involvement.
Low level of education for instance would constitute a major cause of lack of employment ultimately leading to poverty or low income. This in turn would have repercussions on parents’ involvement because parents who are illiterate hardly assist their children in academic matters. Parents’ involvement would thus be high or low depending on the existing factors. When parents are highly involved in children’s education, children are likely to perform and develop well in general and vice versa when they are least involved.

1.13 Operational Definitions of Terms

Pre-school Education: programs offered to children of 3-6 years that prepare them for elementary school.

Socio-economic Status: parents’ monthly income/wages, for example, very low socio-economic status that ranged between: 0 - 10,000 Rwf (15.6$) deemed as very low; 11,000 (17.1$) - 39,000 Rwf (60.9$) low; 40,000 (62.5$) - 69,000 Rwf (107.8$) High; and 70,000 (109.3$) – 100,000+ Rwf (156.3$) very high income.
Parent’s Involvement: it entailed the common roles and behaviors in which parents engage in their children’s education at home and at school. These included learning at home, volunteering as well as decision making, encouraging children to develop positive attitude and respect for school and learning, meeting children’s basic needs, providing care and school requirements, assisting children in doing their homework, checking if the school work is done and making play materials with their children.

Teachers’ perception on PI mutual collaboration, support and participation of teachers and parents at home as well as at school in activities that can directly affect the success of children’s learning. These activities can be for example, teachers inviting parents for field trips, discussing with them about children’s behaviors and performance.

Parents’ level of education: academic qualification of parents of pre-
school children for example, no formal education, primary education, A’ Level certificate, Diploma, Bachelor’s Degree, Masters and PhD.

**Communication:**

- it included activities like visiting the child at school when invited by the teacher,
- allowing parents to ask questions and discussing the child’s progress.

**Voluntary service:**

- unpaid activities that parents participate in at school such as building classrooms, hygiene-related activities and feeding programs at school.

**Monitoring:**

- participating in activities like PTA, pre-school meetings, engaging in pre-school curricula, decision making and in school management.

**Provision of learning resources:**

- included activities like buying writing materials for the child and purchasing story books for the child among others.

**Teaching activities:**

- entailed activities like helping the child to read, telling stories to the child, commenting on the child’s progress and
disciplining the child.

**Reinforcement:** activities like praising the child, listening carefully to the child and answering effectively to the child’s questions.

**Out of school activities:** actions like helping the child how to do homework and checking if the school work is done by the child.

**Shared activities:** practices like eating together with the child, making play materials, playing and praying together with the child.
CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

The literature was reviewed under the following themes: Parents’ Involvement in their children’s education, Factors that influence parents’ involvement in their children’s pre-school education; Strategies used by the school to promote parents’ involvement in their children’s pre-school education and summary of literature.

2.2 Parents’ Involvement in their Children’s Education

The early years of a child's life are fundamentally important as they are a foundation on which the later years depend on. Bruce (2003) reveals that foundation stones of a house are different in kind, but have an effect on the building as a whole. On the same note, giving children what they need particularly during childhood is the best preparation or foundation for adulthood. The type of experiences during formative years shape the child's future health, happiness, growth, development and learning achievement at home, school, and in life within the community (Berndt, 1997). For children to attain holistic growth and development, their success purely depends on the involvement of their parents and caregivers in offering appropriate nurturance. For example parents’ active involvement during the pre-school years have been associated with children’s pre-literacy development, acquisition of
mathematical skills, well developed social skills and positive attitudes toward school (Arnold et al, 2008).

Powell et al (2010) also conducted a study on parent-school relationships using two dimensions: parents’ school involvement and parents' perceptions of teacher responsiveness to children as well as parents in public or state-funded pre-kindergarten classrooms in USA. The study variables were: parents’ school involvement, their home involvement, their education level and family’s or child’s race/ethnicity, influence of parents’ involvement on the children's social and academic outcomes were investigated by individually assessing the children in mathematics and reading in two seasons, namely fall and spring. Findings of Hierarchical Linear Modeling analyses indicated that parents’ school involvement positively predicted children's social skills (d=.55) and mathematics skills (d=.36). Results also negatively predicted problem behaviors (d=.47). On perceived teacher responsiveness to children and parents results showed that parents’ school involvement was positively related to children's early reading (d=.43), and social skills (d=.43), and negatively to problem behaviors (d=.61). The above study thus reveals that parents’ involvement in particular enhances their children’s academic performance.

The Harvard Graduate school of Education (2006) similarly notes that children who play at home and whose parents understand the importance of play in development are likely to demonstrate prosocial and independent behavior in
the classroom. In addition, parent participation with their children in activities such as arts and crafts is associated with children’s literacy development. In addition Gadsden & Bowman (1999) argued that parents and specifically fathers can ensure that their children are exposed to the best environmental stimuli by participating at home and in early childhood education settings like telling stories to their children and reading as well as selecting books with their children. Further Power & Parke (2004) added that children whose fathers shared meals, spent leisure time with them or helped them with reading or home work did significantly better academically than those children whose fathers did not.

However, parenting is embedded in social and cultural contexts that influence parenting styles. Parents may adopt the following types of parenting: authoritarian, authoritative, permissive and uninvolved (Baumrind, 1967). Each of them has repercussions in the way children will turn out to be particularly in their learning. In addition, Deborah (2000) reports that good parenting in the home, including the provision of a secure and stable environment; intellectual stimulation which may incorporate listening attentively to children as Mwoma (2009) indicates; parent-child discussion; good models of constructive social and education values; visits to school to gather relevant information; discussing with teachers on children’s progress or to discuss emergent problems have positive effect on children’s early education. Mwoma (2009) however states that parents and in particular fathers rarely listened to their children when
talking to them because they were always busy with other activities. In addition parents are often unaware of the teachers and schools’ expectations of children; schools generally have not developed strategies to involve parents in curriculum-related decisions.

The family is the most important first educator in the child’s life and as Epstein (2001) notes, children, schools and families will benefit if parents are supported in establishing home environments that foster children’s growth and learning. Families whose basic needs of food, clothing, and shelter are not being met have more difficult time helping their children to do well in school. Schools and community agencies can work together to provide support so that parents can focus on their children’s needs. In Japan, teachers make explicit exacting demands on parents with regard to the initiation of home-based behaviors such as monitoring homework as well as school-based activities like attending school events and communicating with the school (Holloway, 2000).

According to Deborah (2000) on ways to support parents, families and community involvement in their children’s schools in Portland, some strategies that could be used to encourage positive parents’ involvement. They include: surveying parents about the information and workshops they would find most helpful; consulting with them and others in the community about their preferences as well as the best ways to translate or modify messages to all parents and establish home visiting programs. This is because when teachers
visit with parents in the home, teachers can share with them school and classroom expectations, and parents can share information about home situations that might affect student achievement; offer school space where parents can share their parenting successes and challenges and gain knowledge to enhance their parenting skills. Further, schools need to invest time and effort into influencing learning at-home routines. In addition the schools could ask parents to spend at least 30 minutes a day working with their children, reading all children’s work and providing an adequate work place. Grolnick & Slowiaczek (1994) in a study in New Jersey show that when parents are particularly cognitively and intellectually involved in their children’s education, they introduce to them intellectually stimulating materials such as books or current events which sharpen the child’s knowledge in a great way.

Some studies on parents’ involvement in their children’s education have also been conducted in Africa. A research study by Chowa et. al. (2012) in Ghana, showed that Ghanaean parents often have engaged in their children’s learning in one form or another. In addition, parents’ involvement in the school environment appears to be high in school meetings, attendance, and discussing expectations with their children while others never assist their children directly with homework.

In Kenya, which is also in Africa, a study by Ndegwa et.al. (2007), found out that parents’ involvement in assisting their children with homework could vary.
For example parents who did not assist their children gave several reasons why they did not do so. Their reasons included: the child was not given homework by the teachers, the parent was illiterate and those who were educated were too busy to help with homework and hence sent their children for tuition. Ng’eno (2012) in Kenya also indicates that in cities, child care costs have a negative effect to the probability that the mothers work full time. In addition, Connelly and Kimmel (2000) noted that the probability of using ECDE centres based care increases with full time employment of mothers than mothers employed part time for they rely on child care provided by relatives, while others do not enrol their children in pre-school for they do not understand why early childhood programs are important. They also believe their children are not ready to begin formal education.

Mwirichia (2013) concurs with Ndegwa et.al. (2007) that parents in Kenya were involved in pre-school children activities, which helped the children to learn. Some of those activities included: provision of play materials, making play materials together with children, helping the child to do homework and checking if the school work is done by the child. In addition Mwirichia (2013) noted that pre-school children of parents who were involved in their schools’ activities performed better than those whose parents did not, or those who had no responsibility at all. Parents need to be teachers, spectators of their children’s education, employed resources, volunteer resources and also policymakers (Berger, 1991). Mukuna & Indoshi (2012) however add that
parents think only of the material benefits of ECD Centres and ignore the other unquantifiable benefits that are intellectual, psycho-social, spiritual or physical, which as Grolnick & Slowiaczek (1994) noted are also very important.

Other common activities that parents could be involved in according to Henderson and Mapp (2002) include parents’ engagement in educational activities at home, monitoring children’s time spent out of school, communication with their children regarding school and what they are learning and attending school events, such as parent-teacher conferences. Further, Goodall & Vorhaus (2011) add that parents could be engaged in their young children’s learning process by reading with them, providing them with educational games and materials, talking to them about school and learning as well as participating in other joint activities like cooking together. They could also contribute to their children’s education process in different ways including spending some time with them which provides an opportunity for children to learn out of school.

Joan & Jennie (1980) highlight the fact that when all adults (parents and teachers included) work together in the best interest of the child, the youngster will develop a positive interest in reaching his or her own potential. This is borne out in achievement and attendance, both of which are associated with lifelong learning. In addition, when parents provide a rich learning environment at home with activities complementing those of the school,
including talking positively about the school, children develop high levels of social skills, are likely to be more co-operative and self-controlled all of which have a positive outcome for the child.

Furthermore, MINEDUC, (2011) highlights that to provide quality educational opportunities for all children, all of these backgrounds and starting points have to be acknowledged and turned into strengths to the greatest degree possible to help devise educational opportunities for all children. On the contrary, Chowa et. al. (2012) reveals that some parents do not voluntarily participate in preschool activities. Parents for instance only attended PTA meetings because such meetings were often mandatory and also to accrued penalties if they failed to attend.

In Rwanda as entrenched in the republic’s early childhood development policy, a strong public-private and civil society partnership and most importantly parental involvement, is an essential factor to achieve the vital set objectives. However, as Chowa et. al. (2012) pointed out and Tuyisenge, (2011) in a study on ECE curriculum implementation in Burera district, Rwanda, parents removed their children from pre-schools and opted to wait to enroll them for free primary education when they were older, simply because they were requested to sponsor their public pre-schools. Although this points to parents’ non willingness to participate in their children’s education, the purpose of the study by Tuyisenge (2012) however was on challenges faced in the
implementation of early childhood education curriculum and not on parents’ involvement in their pre-school children’s education.

The situation in Rwanda in regard to studies related to parental involvement was grave. With the implementation of the ECD policy, every administrative cell in Rwanda was expected to establish a nursery school (NCDC, 2006). However, although this noble venture was implemented, it was not successfully done the reason being that the pre-schools were to be run and managed by parents who were ill prepared. Many pre-schools started but with time, a number of them were closed down because parents were confused about their role in the management of the schools and they were also unable to sustain them.

Similarly, Ndarihoranye & Ndayambaje (2012) in a study on the socio-economic problems affecting early childhood education in Gasabo District revealed that some parents were willing to participate in educating their children. However, they were not able to pay the levies imposed on them due to poverty. Ntahombyariye & Maniragaba (2012) in a study in Gakenke District on factors that hindered the effective implementation of early childhood education also found that parents’ involvement in pre-school education was low because they were expected to pay a certain amount for tuition which they did not have or were unwilling to pay.
In a more related study, Kagabo (2008) who focused on the impact of teacher-parent partnership on the general academic performance of students in primary schools in Gasabo District indicates that parents involved in their children’s education. However, they were more involved in their children’s education at home than they were at school. Low involvement of parents in primary school was thus a concern to the researcher and prompted her to find out how the situation was in pre-school. Moreover, the global and regional studies conducted are not in Rwandan context. It also appeared that there was no similar study covering parents’ involvement in their children’s education at pre-school level and yet the early years were cited as important because they offer a foundation for schooling in later levels as well as in their growth and development. There was therefore a need to conduct a study in pre-primary schools in Rwanda, to find out parents’ involvement in their children’s education.

2.3 Factors influencing Parents’ Involvement in their children’s education

The ECD Modeling Concept Paper (MINEDUC, 2009), contends that parents play a key role in the development and education of their children. Being the most important, parents influence a child’s life outside the school, through the attitudes they display and encourage, as well as the direct support they provide. Besides supporting the development of their children, parents play an important role in the success of school. Mwaura, Sylvia & Malmberg (2008) studied the effect of pre-school experience on the cognitive development of
children in Madrasa and non-Madrasa Centres in Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania/Zanzibar. Results showed that children with both types of pre-school experience performed better than the home (comparison) group. Further, children attending Madrasa pre-schools achieved significantly higher scores overall. This implies that if parents could be highly involved in their children’s education both at home and pre-school, their children’s learning performance could similarly improve.

However, failure by parents to provide children with basic needs in life, leads to suffering to everybody including the child, the parents as well as the community (Dennis, 2003). Children need to grow up with the capacity for love, joy, fulfillment, responsibility and self-control. Beaver, Brewster, Jones, Keene, Neaum & Tallack (2001), concur that parents have the most knowledge and understanding of their children and if they share information about their children with the school, the child will benefit. Children need consistent handling to feel secure. Parents make choices and are consulted in decisions concerning their children’s education. Their involvement in the education process has positive effect on the progress of children if they become involved early in the child’s education. They are likely to maintain this involvement throughout the child’s educational career. They have a wealth of skills and experiences that can contribute to the childcare centre and their participation could broaden and enrich the program offered to all children.
In addition, Hill & Taylor (2004) found out that parents’ involvement has positive effect on children’s achievement because when parents participate in activities such as volunteering at school, communicating with teachers, participating in academic activities like assisting children with homework at school, attending school events and meetings as well as conferences their children perform better than those whose parents did not participate. This study sought to establish selected factors that influence parents’ involvement in their children’s education.

2.3.1 Socio-economic Status of Parents (SES)

Lee & Bowen (2006) state that Socio- economic status (SES) is clearly important factor affecting parents’ involvement in many countries. Many studies conducted in the United States find that college-educated, relatively affluent parents are more involved in educational activities at the school than are lower SES parents.

In Japan, research shows that some evidence of gap between higher and lower SES children may be attributable to the fact that parents’ aspirations are somewhat higher among higher SES parents and that they may mobilize their financial resources to pay for enrichment classes (Hamama, 1990). According to Ondieki (2012), parents employed use of rewards such as praises and materials presents whenever the child engaged in the desired behavior, the
child eventually learnt to associate good behavior with rewards thus tended to engage in this more often.

Epstein et al (2002; 2005), reported that parents’ involvement positively affects students’ achievement, attendance, self-esteem and overall behavior; emotional well-being and life goals (Epstein 2005). Not only the connection between the above cited, but it is also interesting to note that these benefits’ cross lines of family income and parent educational level (Chavkin and Gonzales, 1995). Most research agrees that low socio-economic status is linked with lower rates of parents’ involvement whereby discrepancies have been recorded between low-income families and levels of parents’ involvement (Smith, 2006). The evidence for this was low amounts of involvement in children’s education of African American parents (Huang and Mason, 2008). In addition, socio-economic background may affect learning outcomes because parents with higher socio-economic status are able to provide their children with financial support and home resources for individual learning (Schulz, 2005). During the study, efforts were made to find out whether parents mobilized their resources in order to promote their children’s early education.

2.3.2 Parents’ Level of Education

Parents’ educational level is a powerful factor that can influence their involvement in their children’s education and ultimately the minor’s academic success or achievement (Okantey, 2008). In addition, Keith (2002) found out
that parents with higher educational attainment and more income volunteer and support school events more than parents with low education. Sargian (1990) also concurs that educational level of parents is greatly connected to the educational attainment of their children. Further, Chowa et. al. (2012) adds that parents who are more educated than their children are more involved at home than those whose education is equivalent to or lower than that of their children. In addition, Koech (2009) found out that low literacy levels lead to limited contribution to teaching and learning. Parents’ who are educated thus value their children’s pre-school education as compared to those whose are less educated.

Educated parents are equipped by virtue of their education to take cognizance of the fact that parent-student-school community relationship is important in order to promote educational attainment and academic achievement of their children (Okantey, 2008). They therefore make the partnership or involvement a priority. In addition parents who visit the school often and wish their children to enjoy diversity and protected education in general, give an enhancement to their children’s educational programme. It is particularly the educated parents who confidently visit their children’s schools without feeling intimidated or timid (Douglas, 1964).

Parents’ education leads to good income and empowers parents to give their children a solid foundation for school and life success. It enables them to build
up strong partnerships between parents and schools in order to sustain achievement standards. Moreover, it heightens their feelings of competence and confidence in guiding their children’s education (Okantey, 2008).

According to Makewa, Role & Otewa (2012), many poor parents have been unable to meet costs and have opted not to enroll their children in school. The increased level of poverty, due to low level of education, makes parents unable to feed their children properly and provide education. In addition, children whose parents cannot afford the cost of instructional materials, school uniforms, tuition fees and activity fees, tend to go to school irregularly and in the long run drop out of school. In the locale identified for the study, there were a number of low income group parents and a study was needed to find out whether parents’ level of education had any influence on their involvement in pre-school education.

2.3.3 Teachers’ Perception on Parents’ Involvement

Pre-school teachers can involve parents in early learning when they share children’s progress and growth using best assessment practices. Regular updates on children’s growth can encourage families to engage in more learning-related activities at home. Thus, families and teachers can work in partnership to ensure that children continue to receive appropriate instruction and related experiences to further their development (NAEYC, 2005). The parent–teacher relationship is implicated in children’s early school adjustment.
Generally, when parents participate in their children’s education, both at home and at school, and experience relationships with teachers characterized by mutuality, warmth, and respect, students achieve more, demonstrate increased achievement and motivation, exhibit higher levels of socio-emotional and behavioral adjustment (Anderson, 2004).

Frequent discussion groups in school where parents are free to share their experiences and insights with one another, are critical to parent-teacher growth in the partnership. The practice enhances parents’ self-confidence and security but only if teachers respected their knowledge and instincts about their own children (Gordon and Browne, 2004). In addition communication in a pre-school should invite parents to share ideas, help form pre-school goals and clarify institutional expectations. When communication is frequent and of high-quality, parents’ evaluation of their children’s teachers, level of comfort with their children’s school and involvement in school-based activities are all substantially higher (Epstein, 2005).

Similarly, Deborah (2000) adds that children are more successful in school when parents are involved in school activities and have a good relationship with teachers of their children. Regular communication of the parents with their children’s teachers can motivate the youngsters to excel in pre-school, produce better school attendance and improve behavior both at home and school. In addition, how teachers and parents interact has a strong impact on
teacher turnover, which can be devastating in poor, minority schools. Furthermore, good communication between teachers and parents make the later feel that they are part of the school community as they are kept aware of events and other important school information like curriculum, assessment, achievement level as well as reporting methods and receiving information about how to support their children.

Teacher characteristics such as level of education and sense of efficacy higher levels of education have similarly been associated with more positive attitudes towards parents’ involvement in school affairs. Lower levels of efficacy seem to be related to reduced teacher-parent-contacts because of time investment required, absence of external rewards for efforts to involve parents, and problems with low commitment or skills. In addition, teachers may actually fear parents’ questioning their professional competence or blame them for children’ problems (Abrams and Gibbs, 2000; Chen and Chandler, 2001). Furthermore, Deborah (2002) reports that communicating frequently with parents about curriculum and ways parents could become involved; helping teachers to see importance of using frequent as well as clear and positive communication strategies with parents; using information from parents, families and community members to focus on appropriate strategies and getting information from home via students and parents could enhance communication.
According to Epstein (1995) parents might be described as being leaders and representatives in making school decisions. In collaborating with the community, parents’ roles may include identifying resources and services in the community that could be used to augment school programs and practices. In addition, Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997) report that parents’ level of involvement will depend on the extent to which they believe their child and the personnel at their child’s school want them to be involved. The effective invitations and demands for parental involvement include children’s expressions of the importance or need for involvement, an inviting school climate and teacher behaviors that facilitate involvement.

Sending children to pre-school is also part of the parents’ involvement. Habumuremyi (2013) in a research study on pre-school enrollment found that parents who were able to sponsor their children’s pre-school education did not do so because there were no trained teachers. This research was needed to sort out whether parents and teachers were empowered and willing to accomplish their responsibilities regarding parents’ involvement in pre-school education in terms of their partnership.

2.4 Strategies used by pre-schools to promote PI in children’s education

According to Epstein (2001), parents have the responsibility for their children’s upbringing and schools remain ultimately responsible for the organization and the quality of education. Similarly, Goodall & Vorhaus (2011), add that it is
important to note the model of partnership, focussing on involvement in school life and supporting children’s learning and education. In two parents families the most common activity in which parents participate in general is in school meetings. However, fathers are substantially less likely than mothers to participate in school activities. It is only in single parent families where fathers’ participation is similar to that of mothers (Winquist, 1997). Mugo (2009) also shares the same sentiments and states that in the African set up, child-care is the domain of women. This could be the main reason why more females than males, participated in pre-school activities.

Deborah (2000) argues that when parents and teachers share pertinent information with each other about children, the more equipped they will be to help the children become successful. Effective communication with families means that the school welcomes and consistently supports families to support their children’s education. In addition, Gargiulo & Graves (1991) suggest that schools can involve and empower parents to fully participate in the education of their children in many ways such as translating parent meetings and informational materials into community language, offering adult English classes and family literacy programs, invite and encourage parents to volunteer at school and enabling parents to share in decision making about school programs and policies.
Engaging parents in school-based volunteer opportunities is usually one of the first ways that parents and the school personnel promote parents’ involvement. In other words, recruiting and organizing volunteer support of school events can be truly helpful to teachers while increasing community awareness of the school, its mission and issues teachers face (Margaret and Leer, 2012). In addition, involving parents in decision making at the school system level by consulting parents’ representatives on education policy, school development issues, representation on committees and advisory groups impacts children’s achievement largely because it builds relationships between parents and schools (Desforges and Abouchaar, 2003).

Parents report many barriers to becoming involved, such as limited availability of time, lack of confidence, language and fear of school. Learning what barriers exist in your school could be an important step to increase parents’ involvement (Epstein, 2005). Further, Goodall & Vorhaus (2011), add that educators should listen to parents, deal with language barriers, improve communication, take concrete action and learn about family situations which seem to be the key aspects for overcoming problems. In addition, throughout the year, the school could survey parents about their interests and availability to volunteer, invite parents to ride the school bus and eat lunch with their children, an effort which offers a way for the school to be accessible and welcoming (Deborah, 2000). The present study will sought to find out whether
or not, there were strategies used by pre-schools to promote parents’ involvement in pre-schools sampled.

2.5 Summary and Gap Identification

Reviewed literature in this chapter has shown that parents’ involvement is a key component in children’s success in learning both at home and school. Further, research studies reviewed on parents’ involvement in pre-schools show that some combined factors such as parent socio-economic status, their level of education, teachers’ perception on parents’ involvement and strategies used by the school to improve parents’ involvement were key in determining parents’ level of involvement in their pre-school children’s education. Low income families for example were less involved in their children’s education and vice versa. Parents’ level of education was also found to affect their involvement in their children’s education. The higher the level of education the more involved in their pre-school children’s education they were likely to be.

Teachers’ perception on parents’ involvement similarly determined how readily or not parents participated in their children’s education. Positive or negative perception attracted similar reactions. Strategies to improve parents’ involvement such as creating partnership between parents and teachers, sharing pertinent information between parents and teachers, engaging parents in school-based volunteer opportunities and involving them in decision making were reviewed. Although various strategies to promote parents’ involvement
have been documented various researchers, parents’ involvement in pre-schools in Rwanda are poor. In addition, researches conducted in Rwanda focused on parent-teacher relationship at primary school level and socio-economic factors but no study had been carried out to investigate reasons behind poor parents’ involvement in pre-schools. The current study therefore tried to fill the gap on extent to which parents’ participated in educational activities at pre-school and at home.
CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction
This chapter describes the research design and locale; variables under study; the population under study; sampling techniques and sample size. It also discusses research instruments, data collection techniques and data analysis.

3.2. Research Design and Locale

3.2.1 Research Design
The descriptive research design was employed and specifically using the survey method to investigate whether parents were involved in their pre-school children’s education in Gasabo District, Rwanda. This design was chosen because the researcher sought to get a detailed account of parents’ own opinions of their involvement in their pre-school children’s education and also establish the factors that influence their involvement. The survey method was suitable for this study since it was useful in describing the factors that influenced parents’ involvement. This design embraced both qualitative and quantitative methods to analyze data that were collected from the study sample. Both methods were chosen because they compliment each other in that qualitative methods provide the in-depth explanations while quantitative methods provide the hard data needed to meet required objectives (Mugenda, 2003).
3.2.2 Research Locale

The present study was conducted in Gasabo District, Kigali City, in Rwanda. Gasabo District was selected due to its urban and rural settings. In addition, in Gasabo district there is a diversified population from humble to richest families who live on their salaries and business.

3.2.1. Variables

The variables under study included the independent variables (factors influencing parents’ involvement) and the dependent (parents’ involvement in their children’s education as described below.

- **Independent Variables**
  
  i) Parents’ Involvement in their children’s education which was measured by stating some activities that parents were involved in. These activities included: praising children for a good performance, disciplining them, listening carefully when they talked to them, giving presents when they performed well, commenting positively on their children’s progress, answering their children’s questions effectively, praying together with their children, eating together with them, playing with them and making play materials together with the children.

  ii) Socio-economic status was measured through establishing how high or low the household income was since it determined parents’ ability to support their children’s education or not. A 4-point likert scale was
used to categorized parents’ income based on Rwandan francs (Rwf) where very low was taken to be 0 - 10,000 Rwf; 11,000 - 39,000 Rwf = low; 40,000 - 69,000 Rwf = high; and 70,000 - 100,000 Rwf = very high. One thousand (1,000 Rwf) was approximately 1.6 dollars.

iii) Parents’ level of education was established by asking parents to indicate their educational starting with no formal education, primary certificate, secondary certificate, diploma certificate and degree.

iv) Teachers’ perception on parents’ involvement was measured using a 3-point rating scale to determine parents’ informal visits to school, talking to the teachers about the child’s progress, discussing children’s performance and behaviors, providing information to parents about how to monitor and discuss school work at home, allowing parents to ask questions at school and participating in school decision making.

v) Strategies on what could be done by the school to promote parents’ involvement in pre-school were measured by asking open ended questions to parents, pre-school teachers and head teachers.

- **Dependent Variables**

These were roles and behaviors in which parents engaged in their children’s education at home and at school and included learning at home, volunteering as well as decision making, encouraging children to develop positive attitude and
respect for school and learning, meeting children’s basic needs, providing care and school requirements, assisting children in doing their homework, checking if the school work is done, making play material with their children. A 3-point likert scale consisting responses such as: Always, Rarely and not at all were used to measure the variables.

3.3 Population
The target population of this study consisted of 15 sectors (Sub-districts), 18 pre-schools as well as head teachers, 79 pre-school teachers and 1104 parents with children in pre-schools. The total target population was 1201 participants in the two sectors.

3.4 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size Determination
This section discusses different sampling techniques that were used in the present study to get the sample. It also discusses the size of the sample that was selected for study and the reason for the selection made.

3.4.1 Sampling Techniques
Gasabo District was purposively selected because it was the biggest district in Kigali City with a diversity of population as all the spheres of population were represented. For representativeness of the findings, Kacyiru and Rusororo Sectors were also purposively selected. Kacyiru Sector was selected since the inhabitants of Kacyiru sector live on their salaries while others did business
that enabled them to support their children’ education. Rusororo Sector, located in Eastern part of the District, was selected to represent the outskirts of the District with rural characteristics. To ensure that all individuals in the population were given an equal chance to participate, random sampling technique was used to select the pre-schools, teachers and parents of pre-school children. Therefore 6 (30%) pre-schools as well as one teacher per school were selected in 3 pre-schools and another 2 teachers each in 3 pre-schools, thus a total sample of 9 (11%) of them, while for the parents, 110 (10%) of them were selected. As for the pre-school head teachers, 6 (30%) were purposively sampled for interview in line with Mugenda & Mugenda (2003), since their schools were already included in the sample.

3.4.2 Sample Size

The sample size consisted of 6 (30%) pre-schools, 6 (30%) pre-school head teachers. As for the parents, 110 (10%) and 9 (11%) pre-school teachers were selected for the study.

According to Gay (1981), a sample size of between 10% - 30% of the total population is adequate for study in descriptive research. As for procedure, the researcher exercised the sentiments of Patton (1990) who states that there is no rule when determining the sample size for qualitative studies, the researcher has to balance the need for appropriate data with the resources necessary to collect it. The study sample size is presented in table 3.1 below.
Table 3.1 Sampling Frame

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Kacyiru Sector</th>
<th>Rusororo Sector</th>
<th>Total target</th>
<th>% Total sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Target Selected sample</td>
<td>Target Selected sample</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools</td>
<td>11 3</td>
<td>7 3</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>45 5</td>
<td>31 4</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head teachers</td>
<td>11 3</td>
<td>7 3</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>748 74</td>
<td>356 36</td>
<td>1104</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1201</td>
<td>125</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

3.5 Research Instruments

Data were gathered using a questionnaire for parents as well as an interview schedule for teachers and head teachers. The instruments are described below:

3.5.1 Questionnaire for Parents

The questionnaire for parents consisted of closed ended questions yielding to descriptive statistics on parents’ involvement activities and open-ended questions which gave qualitative data. The questionnaire had section A and B. Section A gathered demographic information about the parents’ personal identification for example Parents’ gender; section B gathered information about parents’ involvement in children’s pre-school education for example activities parents get involved in like participating in making play materials with their children, volunteering in pre-school related activities. The questionnaire was suitable because it provided for use of standardized questions to all parent participants, ensured their anonymity and simultaneously provided them the opportunity to participate without much restriction.
3.5.2 Interview Guide for Pre-school Teachers and Head Teachers

The interview was administered to 9 pre-school teachers and 6 head teachers. Interviews were administered to capture in-depth information from teachers and head teachers regarding parents’ involvement in their children’s education. An interview was suitable in this study because it helped the researcher gain insights on parents’ involvement from the head teachers and pre-school teachers that confirmed parents’ answers. From their responses it was possible to establish whether there was low or high parents’ involvement which may contribute to positive or negative influence on child’s pre-school education. The interview for pre-school head teachers and teachers similarly consisted of two sections. Section A sought demographic information about teachers and head teachers’ personal identification like teachers’ and head teachers’ qualification while section B gathered information about parents’ involvement in their pre-school children’s education as well as strategies used by pre-schools to promote parents’ involvement.

3.5.3 Pilot Study

The pilot study was conducted using 6 pre-schools, 12 parents, 6 pre-school teachers as well as head teachers from Kacyiru and Rusororo sectors. This sample was not included in the main study. The findings from the pilot study allowed the researcher to rework on the research instruments for the improvement in restating of objectives to capture the study variables adequately, correcting grammatical errors that had not been seen, and any
ambiguities. The head teachers’ interview guide was not piloted but their responses were triangulated with the questionnaires. Pilot study took a period of one week in both sectors.

3.5.4 Validity of the Instruments

Content validity was employed whereby the researcher with the help of experts read through the responses in the questionnaires and interview schedule to ensure that the responses were answering the questions asked. Items that were not adequate in terms of generating the required information as per the study objectives were modified or dropped and replaced with new ones.

3.5.5 Reliability of the Instruments

The internal consistency method was used to test reliability of the instruments during piloting, where 12 parents from the population of the study were given the questionnaire to fill on parents’ involvement. The pilot sample was however not included in the main study. It was assumed that the responses from two groups (odd numbers and even numbers) were very similar because they reflected almost the same information. The scores were correlated using Cronbach’s Alpha. Findings indicated that there was a strong positive correlation where $\alpha = 0.839$. Therefore the instrument was found reliable to be used to collect data for this study as shown below.
3.6. Data Collection

Data were collected in a span of one month which was divided as follows: the first two weeks the researcher visited the two sectors Kacyiru and Rusororo. The researcher briefed the teachers, head teachers and parents on the purpose and objectives of the study, so that they could understand the importance of giving relevant information on parents’ involvement in pre-school children’s education. After the briefing, the researcher distributed questionnaires to the parents who attended pre-school meeting. The researcher remained in the study locale throughout the data collection period in order to be available to give clarification where it was needed. The respondents were given fifty minutes to fill the questionnaires after which the researcher collected them immediately after completion. Thereafter, the researcher organized for a two week visit, one week for each sector to go and interview teachers and head teachers. The interview was scheduled as follows: the first three days, the researcher met with the head teachers individually in their office and the interactions lasted 15 minutes for each respondent. As for the teachers, seven days were set aside for the interviews which were scheduled in the afternoons because they did not have classes but remained in their pre-schools preparing lessons for the next day.

3.7 Data Analysis

Data were edited, coded and analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. The qualitative data were derived from open-ended questions in the questionnaire
and interview schedule while quantitative data were derived from closed ended questions. The quantitative data were presented using descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution, percentages and tabulations. As for the qualitative data, they were presented in text using actual words of the participants. According to Green (2002) quantitative research produces results which can be expressed using numbers or statistics, exploring the extent to which something happens while qualitative research explores individual viewpoints which are not so easily measured.

3.8 Logistical and Ethical Considerations

3.8.1 Logistical Considerations

Before embarking on the study, the researcher first sought permission to carry out this research. A letter from Kenyatta University Graduate School was presented to the Ministry of Education in Rwanda to secure a research permit in order to get into the field for data collection.

3.8.2 Ethical Considerations

As for ethical considerations, the researcher ensured and assured the participants that all their responses would be treated with strict confidentiality and would only be used for the purpose of the study. Besides, a copy of the thesis proposal was submitted to the Ministry of Education, Rwanda and the researcher promised to deposit a copy of the final work. All scholarly works quoted were recognized.
CHAPTER FOUR
FINDINGS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings, interpretation and discussions of the results in relation to the objectives of the study.

The study sought to investigate parents’ involvement in their children’s pre-school education with the following objectives:

1. To find out parents’ involvement in their pre-school children’s education in Gasabo District.
2. To find out socio-economic status of parents in Gasabo District.
3. To find out parents’ level of education in Gasabo District.
4. To find out teachers’ perception on parents’ involvement in Gasabo District.
5. To establish the strategies used in promoting parents’ involvement in their children’s pre-school education in Gasabo District.

4.2 Demographic Characteristics of Parents, Teachers and Head teachers

Parents’ demographic characteristics included their gender and occupation while that of pre-school teachers and head teachers included their gender and academic qualifications. Tables 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 present the findings on the
above demographic information for parents, pre-school teachers and head teachers.

4.2.1 Parents, Teachers and Head teachers’ Gender

Parents, teachers and head teachers were asked to indicate their gender whether male or female. Table 4.1 presents demographic findings on the participants’ gender.

Table 4.1 Parents, Teachers and Head teachers’ Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Parents</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Head teachers</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>66.6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>66.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1 shows that more female parents 72 (65%) than males 38 (34.5%) participated in the study. This high percentage of female parent respondents was due to the fact that male parents are the main household providers and they are always busy in family supporting activities. There were also slightly more female teachers 6 out of 9 and head teachers 4 out of 6 than males who participated in the study. The reason for this low representation of male teachers and head teachers in pre-school is that in Rwanda, people still believe that pre-school teachers should be female. These findings are supported by Mugo (2009) who also established in her study that Kenyans had the same belief because in the African set up, child-care is the domain of women and
could be the main reason why there were more female teachers than males in the pre-schools.

### 4.2.2 Parents’ Occupation

Parents were asked to indicate the kind of job they did to earn a living. They were to indicate whether they were farmers, business, teachers and local government workers. Table 4.2 presents results on parents’ occupation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Frequency: n=110</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Government workers</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>110</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2 shows that 9 (8%) of parents were farmers, 40 (36%) of them were business men, 49 (45%) were teachers and 12 (11%) of them were local government workers. The findings indicate that parents had occupations that helped them to earn more money per month. It can therefore be deduced that parents who participated in the study were not poor because majority had jobs.
4.2.3 Teachers and Head teachers’ Qualifications

Qualifications of Pre-school teachers and head teachers were established by asking them to state their academic level ranging from O’ Level certificate, A’ Level certificate, Diploma in ECE and no training in ECE. Table 4.3 shows demographic findings on pre-school teachers and head teachers’ qualifications.

Table 4.3 Pre-school Teachers and Head teachers’ Qualifications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Head teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O’ Level certificate</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A’ Level certificate</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma in ECE</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No training in ECE</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor in other fields</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.3 shows that none of the participants had O’ level certificate, 6 had A’ level certificate in other fields, 1 had Diploma in ECE, 2 had no training in ECE and 6 had a (Bachelor) in other fields not related to ECE. The finding shows that the majority 12 out of 15 of pre-school staff had A’ Level certificates and Bachelor in other field not related to ECE. This could probably be due to the fact that ECE programs were relatively new in Rwanda.

Further, it was necessary to establish pre-school teachers and head teachers’ qualifications because Abrams & Gibbs, (2000), Chen & Chandler (2001) revealed that teacher characteristics such as level of education and sense of
efficacy have been associated with more positive attitudes towards parent involvement while lower levels of efficacy seem to be related to reduced teacher-parent-contacts.

4.3 Findings on Parents’ involvement in their pre-school children’s education

Objective one sought to establish whether parents were involved in their preschool children’s education. A 3-point scale was used to establish how often parents were involved in various education activities with responses ranging from not at all, rarely and always. Parents’ involvement in their children’s education was measured by the number of different activities that they participated in to promote their children’s pre-school education. Involvement activities were broadly categorized as provision of learning resources, teaching activities, reinforcement activities, out of school parents’ involvement activities and shared activities. Parents were said to have high involvement in their children’s education if they always did such activities. They were considered moderately involved if they rarely participated in the said activity and lowly involved if they did not participate at all in any activity. These broad activities were again sub grouped into smaller activities as presented in tables 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8.
4.3.1 Parents’ Involvement in Provision of Learning Resources

Provision of learning resources included buying pre-school writing materials for the child, purchasing story books for them, paying and motivating them with presents. Table 4.4 shows results on parents’ involvement in provision of learning resources.

Table 4.4 Involvements in Provision of Learning Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Total n=110</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Buying writing materials for the child</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>73.6</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchasing story books for the child</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>63.6</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving present to the child when perform well</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>72.7</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.4 shows that 2 (1.8%) of parents indicated that they did not buy pre-school materials for their children at all, 27 (24.5%) of them reported that they rarely bought pre-school materials while 81 (73.6%) of them confirmed that they always bought pre-school materials for their children. The findings thus confirm that the majority of parents always bought pre-school materials for their children which mean that parents in urban areas had good income to be able to provide resources required by their children. They also have high
expectations and are always committed in supporting their children’s pre-

On purchasing story books for the child, 9 (8.1%) of parents reported that they
did not buy story books for their children at all, 70 (63.6%) of them reported
that they rarely bought story books for their children while 31 (28.1%) of them
reported that they always bought story books for their children. From the
findings majority the parents rarely purchased story books for their children
which could be because they were not actively involved in pre-school
curriculum activities and also the belief that their children were not yet ready to
read books. Findings are supported by Glolnick & Slowiaczek (1994) who
showed that parents are cognitively and intellectually involved in their
children’s education when they introduce intellectually stimulating materials to
a child, such as books or current events. From the results it can therefore be
concluded that the sampled parents were cognitively and intellectually
uninvolved.

In connection to giving presents to children for good performance, 4 (3.6%) of
parents respondents reported that they did not give presents to their children at
all, 26 (23.6%) of them reported that they rarely gave presents while 80
(72.7%) of parents confirmed that they always gave presents to their children
for good performance. The findings show that the majority of parents always
gave presents to their children for good performance which can be taken to
imply that generally they knew the importance of motivation and thus the provision of positive reinforcement for their children through presents. These sentiments are supported by Ondieki (2012) who found out that parents employed use of rewards such as praises and materials presents whenever the child engaged in the desired behavior, the child eventually learnt to associate good behavior with rewards thus tended to engage in this more often.

4.3.2 Parents’ Involvement in Teaching Activities

Parents’ involvement in teaching activities included telling stories to the child, commenting on the child’s progress and disciplining the child. Table 4.5 presents results on parents’ involvement in teaching activities.

Table 4.5 Involvement in Teaching Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Total n=110</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Telling stories to the child</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>72.7</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commenting on the child’s progress</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>64.5</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>33.6</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disciplining the child</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>27.2</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching the child how to read</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>46.3</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>44.5</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.5 shows that 6 (5.4%) of parents respondents reported that they did not tell stories to their children at all, 80 (72.7%) of them reported that they rarely did so while 24 (21.8%) of them reported that they always told stories to their
children. The findings clearly show that the majority of parents rarely told stories to their children which could be as a result of over-engagement in work activities and fatigue after work. Reviewed literature by Gadsden & Bowman (1999) showed that children whose parents/fathers told them stories excelled academically and in their daily life.

On commenting on children’s progress, the findings show that 2 (1.8%) of parents reported that they did not remark on their children’s progress at all, 71 (64.5%) of them reported that they rarely did so while 37 (33.6%) of them reported that they always commented on their children’s progress. On disciplining their children, 3 (2.7%) of parents confirmed that they did not discipline their children at all, 30 (27.2%) of them reported that they rarely did so while 77 (70%) of the parents confirmed that they always disciplined their children. The findings therefore show that majority of the parent respondents confirmed that they rarely commented on their children’s progress while majority of them confirmed that they always disciplined their children. This means that parents considered commenting on their children’s progress and disciplining them to be their major responsibility. Pre-school teachers can involve parents in early learning when they share children’s progress and growth using best assessment practices. Thus, families and teachers can work in partnership to ensure that children continue to receive appropriate instruction and related experiences to further their development. The parent–teacher
relationship is implicated in children’s early school adjustment (NAEYC, 2005).

On teaching the child how to read, 10 (9%) of parents confirmed that they did not teach their children how to read at all, 51 (46.3%) of them reported that they rarely did so and 49 (44.5%) of them reported that they always taught them how to read. These findings indicate that about 55.3% of the parent respondents rarely or did not teach their children how to read. This implies that the parents were either too busy or they left this activity to be performed by the teachers because may be they do not know that was their responsibility to do so. Gadsden & Bowman (1999) argue that children whose parents/fathers read and selected books with them performed better than those whose parents/father did not. This may ultimately have negative effects on the pre-school children’s education.

Deborah (2000) pointed out that good parenting in the home, including the provision of a secure and stable environment; intellectual stimulation; parent-child discussion; good models of constructive social and education values; visits to school to gather relevant information; discussing with teachers on children’s progress or to discuss emergent problems have positive effect on children’s early education. Low involvement however definitely would have negative impact on children’s early education.
4.3.3 Parents’ Involvement in Reinforcement Activities

Parents’ reinforcement activities included praising children when they performed well, listening carefully when they were talking and answering their questions effectively were investigated in the study. Table 4.6 presents results on parents’ involvement in reinforcement activities.

Table 4.6 Involvements in Reinforcement Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Total n=110</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Praising the child when perform well</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>53.6</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>44.5</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening carefully when the child is talking</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>56.3</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>36.6</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answer effectively to the child’s question</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>41.8</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>55.4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results on table 4.6 show that 2 (1.8%) of parents reported that they did not praise their children for good performance at all, 59 (53.6%) of them reported that they rarely praised their children while 49 (44.5%) of them reported that they always praised them. The findings thus indicate that an average number of parents (55.4%) were not positively involved in praising their children for good performance. This implies that their children may not be motivated to work hard. Ondieki (2012) found that parents who employed use of rewards such as praises and giving presents whenever the child engaged in the desired behavior,
the children eventually learnt to associate good behavior with rewards thus tended to engage in it more often.

On parents listening carefully to children when they talked to them the results show that 8 (7.2%) of them reported that they did not listen carefully at all when their children were talking to them, 62 (56.3%) of them reported that they rarely listened carefully while 40 (36.3%) of them reported that they always listened carefully. The findings indicate that the majority of the parent respondents confirmed that parents rarely listened carefully to their children when talking to them. The above findings were consistent with Mwoma (2009) who found out that fathers rarely listened to their children when talking to them because they were always busy with other activities. However, a relatively small percentage 40 (36.3%) of respondents confirmed that parents always listened carefully to their children when talking to them. This percentage may represent some parents who were aware of the importance of listening to their children when they talk to them.

On answering effectively to the child’s question, 46 (41.8%) of parents indicated that they did not at all answer effectively to their children’s questions, 61 (55.4%) of them indicated that they rarely did so while 3 (2.7%) of them indicated that they always answered effectively to the child’s questions. The findings show that majority of the parent respondents reported that they rarely answered their children’s questions effectively. This could
probably be due to the kind of questions children asked whether they were related to the child’s age and whether parents were able to answer those questions or not.

### 4.3.4 Out of School Parents’ Involvement

Parents’ involvement in out of school activities included teaching the child how to read, helping them to do homework and checking if their work was done. Table 4.7 presents the results on parents’ involvement in out of school activities.

**Table 4.7 Involvements in Out of School Activities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Total n=110</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Helping the child to do homework</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>51.8</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>36.3</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checking if the school work is done by the child</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>55.4</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.7 shows that 13 (11.8\%) of parents confirmed that they did not help their children at all to do homework, 57 (51.8\%) of them reported that they rarely helped them do homework while 40 (36.3\%) of them reported that they always helped them to do homework. On checking if the children’s school work was done by the child 24 (21.8\%) of parents respondents reported that they did not check at all if the school work was done, 61 (55.4\%) of them reported that they rarely did while 36 (32.7\%) of them confirmed that they
always checked if the school work was done. These findings indicate that quite there was negative involvement by a good number of parent respondents in checking if their children’s school work was done. This was contrary to Kagabo (2008) study on parents’ involvement who found out that parents of primary school children in Gasabo District, Rwanda were more involved in their children’s education at home than at school.

On another note, there might be various reasons hindering parents from positively involving themselves in out of school activities as Ndegwa et.al. (2007) noted. He found that parents’ involvement in assisting their children with their homework could vary. Some of them might not be involved in out of school activities because they were not given homework by the teachers, the parent could be illiterate and those who were educated might be too busy to help with homework and therefore opting to send them for tuition. Deborah (2000) advises that schools should ask parents to spend at least 30 minutes a day working with their children, reading all children’s work and providing them with an adequate work place in order to enhance their learning output.

4.3.5 Parents’ Involvement in Shared Activities

The study also explored parents’ involvement in shared activities which incorporated eating together with the child, making play material with them, playing with them and also praying with them. Table 4.8 presents the findings on parents’ involvement in shared activities.
Table 4.8 Involvements in Shared Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Total n=110</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eating together with the child</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>56.3</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making play material with the child</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>38.1</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>50.9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playing together with the child</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>62.7</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Praying together with the child</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>52.7</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>27.2</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.8 shows that 19 (17.2%) of parents respondents reported that they did not eat together with their children at all, 62 (56.3%) of them reported that they rarely ate together with them and 29 (26.3%) of them reported that they always ate together with their children. The findings show that the majority of the parent respondents indicated that they rarely ate together with their children. This could be as result of cultural beliefs or a family’s decision that children may or may not eat together with their parents. It could also imply that parents did not share supper with their children because by the time they arrived home from work, the children were already asleep. Power & Parke (2004) who have shown that children whose fathers shared meals with them did significantly better academically than those children whose fathers did not.
On making play materials with the child, 42 (38.1%) of parent respondents reported that they did not at all make play materials with their children, 56 (50.9%) indicated that they rarely did so while 12 (10.9%) of them confirmed that they always made play materials with their children. The findings thus show that majority of the parents rarely made play materials with their children, probably because the parents were not informed of the importance of play materials for young children in general and therefore did not see it necessary to engage in their making. It could also be due to the fact that some parents saw play as a waste of time and that children should instead concentrate on reading and doing academic work. The small percentage 12 (10.9%) of respondents of parents who participated in making play materials must be the few who understood the importance of play in contributing to their children’s development and as a way of learning. Mwirichia (2013); Ndegwa et.al. (2007) point out that engagement of parents in activities such as making materials together with their children, helped the children to learn. The Harvard Graduate school of Education (2006) similarly notes that children who play at home and whose parents understand the importance of play in development are likely to demonstrate prosocial and independent behavior in the classroom. In addition, parent participation with their children in activities such as arts and crafts is associated with children’s literacy development.
On playing with the child, 20 (18.1%) of parents confirmed that they did not play with their children at all, 69 (62.7%) of them reported that they rarely played with them while 21 (19%) of them reported that they always played with their children. The findings indicate that many parents did not find it necessary to play with their children while only a few of them got involved in their children’s play most probably because they knew its importance on the development of the child. The Harvard Graduate school of Education (2006) notes that children who play at home and whose parents understand the importance of play in development are likely to demonstrate prosocial and independent behavior in the classroom. In addition, parent participation with their children in activities such as arts and crafts is associated with children’s literacy development.

On praying together with the child, 22 (20%) of parent respondents indicated that they did not pray together with their children at all, 58 (52.7%) of them indicated that they rarely did so while 30 (27.2%) of them always prayed together with their children. These findings reveal that the majority of the parents rarely prayed together with their children which could probably be due to the fact that they were always busy in their daily work. It is also possible the parents did not appreciate prayers or they might not know its importance. On the other hand, the small percentage of parents who indicated that they always prayed together with their children could be those who considered that spiritual development is needed for success in the life of the child. Reviewed literature
shows that parents at times only think of the material benefits of ECD Centres and ignored the other unquantifiable benefits such as intellectual, psychosocial, spiritual or physical (Mukuna and Indoshi, 2012).

In the interview with pre-school teachers and head teachers, majority 14 out of 15 of them confirmed that parents participated in their children’s pre-school education. One of the head teachers confirmed that parents did not participate in their children’s pre-school education and highlighted the causes of poor participation in shared activities like poor parenting styles. These were also noted by Baumrind (1967) like lack of knowledge and skills about their participation in parenting and similarly lack of time due to business which Debora (2000) also pointed out. The implication of the above findings shows that parents always participated in activities that requested them to support their children financially and moderately in other activities. This could be because they were challenged to combine their daily business and seeking time to follow up their children’s education.

Berger (1991) advises that parents should be teachers, spectators of their children’s education, providers of resources and be policymakers. Henderson and Mapp (2002) also adds that several parents’ engagement in common activities like educational activities at home, monitoring children’s time spent out of school, communication with their children regarding school and what
they are learning and attendance at school events, such as parent-teacher conferences contribute to positive school performance by their children.

4.4 Socio-economic Status of Parents

Objective two sought to find out the socio-economic status of parents. Parents were asked to indicate their approximate monthly income which was rated as 0 - 10,000 Rwf (very low); 11,000 - 39,000 Rwf (low); 40,000 - 69,000 Rwf (high) and 70,000 - 100,000 Rwf (very high) where one thousand Rwandan francs (1,000 Rwf) was approximately to 1.6 dollars. Table 4.9 presents findings for this objective.

Table 4.9 Parents’ Monthly Income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income in Rwandan francs (Rwf)</th>
<th>Frequency: n=110</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 10,000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,000 - 39,000</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40,000 - 69,000</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70,000 - 100,000+</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>110</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1,000 Rwf = approximately 1.6 dollars

Table 4.9 shows that the majority of parent respondents 53 (48%) earn 40,000-69,000Rwf (Rwandan francs) per month which is moderate earning. The second group of parents that followed was 30 (27.2%) with a monthly earning from 70,000- 100,000+ Rwf (very high). The information from the interview with pre-school teachers and head teacher respondents shows that 6 out of 9 of
pre-school teachers and all pre-school head teachers reported that parents’ monthly income was very good while 3 out of 9 of pre-school teachers reported that monthly income of parents were good. This implies that parents’ earnings were high enough to enable them to support their children’s pre-school education financially. The findings were consistent with Smith (2006) who found out that low socio-economic status is linked with lower rates of parents’ involvement whereby discrepancies were recorded between low-income families and levels of parents’ involvement.

4.5 Findings on Parents’ Level of Education

Objective three sought to establish parents’ academic level ranging from no formal education, primary certificate, secondary certificate and the university degree. Table 4.10 presents findings on parents’ academic level.

Table 4.10 Parents’ Level of Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of education</th>
<th>Frequency: n=110</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No formal education</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary certificate</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary certificate</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University degree</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>110</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the above table (0%) parent respondents had no formal education, 14 (13%) had primary certificate, 53 (48%) had secondary certificate and 43 (39%) had the university degree. Based on these findings it may be concluded that the
majority 53 (48%) of parents in Kacyiru and Rusororo sectors had secondary education and also a good number 43 (39%) of them had university education.

Results from the interview with pre-school teachers indicated that parents’ level of education could enhance parents’ involvement. Below are their sentiments: “parents’ level of education increases families’ income, educated parents are able to get a job and perform it well. They added that, “educated parents have high expectation and awareness on importance of education”.

The findings from the interview with head teachers similarly linked parents’ involvement with their level of education. One of the head teachers emphasized this in the following words: “the link is observed through the follow up educated parents do every day when they came back home to their children”. Another head teacher said that, “educated parents always ask and continuously collect information about the progress of their children while uneducated parents do not make much effort regarding their children’s progress”. A number of head teachers also indicated that, when parents are educated they have job opportunities that increase their families’ income which in turn enabled them to support their children’s education.

The findings were consistent with Okantey (2008) who revealed that educational level of parents is a powerful factor which influences their children’s academic success. In addition, Sargiani (1990) concurs with these
remarks that educational level of parents is greatly connected to the educational attainment of their children.

4.6 Teachers’ Perception on Parents’ Involvement

Objective four sought to find out teachers’ perception on parents’ involvement. Teachers were asked to list pre-school related activities parents got involved in. Involvement activities were broadly categorized as monitoring activities, communication activities and provision of voluntary services. Parents’ level of involvement was rated from not at all, rarely and always based on 12 items as presented in tables 4.11, 4.12 and 4.13.

4.6.1 Teachers’ perception on Parents’ Involvement in Monitoring Activities

Parents’ involvement in monitoring activities according to teachers included participating in PTA, attending pre-school meetings, participating in pre-school curricula as well as pre-school decision making and in funds management. Table 4.11 presents the results on how teachers responded to each of the activities listed above using responses ranging from not at all, rarely and always.
Table 4.11 Perception on Monitoring Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Activity</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>N = 9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frq</td>
<td>Frq</td>
<td>Frq</td>
<td>Tot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent, association</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>66.6%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School meetings</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>55.5%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-school curricula</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>66.6%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-school decision-making</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td>44.4%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School management, funds</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>55.5%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.11 indicates that the majority 6 (66.6%) of teachers reported that parents did not participate in PTA at all. On the other hand, 1 (11.1%) of teachers reported that parents rarely participated in PTA while 2 (22.2%) of them reported that parents always participated in PTA. The findings show that majority of teachers confirmed that parents did not participate at all in PTA probably because they were always busy with their daily activities or jobs or PTA as earlier noted and did not exist in their pre-school organizations.

As for the small number of teachers who revealed that parents always participated in PTA, it implies that parents may have considered PTA to be important on their children’ learning thus their motivation to participate in PTA activities. If not, they might have attended PTA meetings even though they did not wish to due to the fact that the meetings were mandatory for parents or
because non attendance attracted penalties. Mwirichia (2013) noted that children of parents who had responsibilities in the school performed better than those whose parents had no responsibility at all.

Results show that 1 (11.1%) of teachers indicated that parents did not attend pre-school meetings at all, 5 (55.5%) of them reported that parents rarely did while 3 (33.3%) of teachers confirmed that they always attended meetings.

Findings show that majority 5 (55.5%) of teachers reported that parents rarely attended meetings. This is probably because they envisioned that their house maids could attend on their behalf since the parents were full time workers. A good number 3 (33.3%) of them however indicated that some parents always attended meetings. This is either because they valued their provision of moral support towards their children’s education or because it was compulsory to attend the meetings. Chowa et. al. (2012) reveal that some parents do not voluntarily participate in pre-school activities. Parents for instance only attended PTA meetings because such meetings were often mandatory and also to avoid penalties that come with failure to attend.

On the other hand, 6 (66.6%) of teachers reported that parents did not participate in pre-school curricula at all, 1 (11.1%) of them reported that parents rarely did so, while 2 (22.2%) of them confirmed that parents always participated.
Results show that majority 6 (66.6%) of teachers confirmed that parents did not participate in pre-school curricula probably because the teachers were not aware that parents were expected to participate when revising pre-school curriculum. These findings were supported by Desforges & Abouchaar (2003) who advised that involving parents in decision making at school through consulting their representatives on education policy, school development issues, including parent representation on committees and advisory groups, impacted children’s achievement largely because it builds relationships between parents and schools. Similarly parents also considered that it was the task of the school to give curriculum without consulting them. Beaver et al (2001); Deborah (2012) concur that parents have the most knowledge and understanding of their children and if they share information about their children with the school, the child would benefit.

A small number 2 (22.2%) of teachers showed that parents always participated in pre-school curriculum. This implies that some schools may have trained staff who involved parents in pre-school activities because they were aware of its value. The above findings concur with Deborah (2000) who points out that communicating frequently with parents about curriculum and ways they could become involved may enhance communication. In addition, helping teachers see importance of using frequent, clear and positive communication strategies with parents, using information from parents, families and community
members to focus on appropriate strategies as well as getting information from home via students and parents could enhance communication.

Findings show that 2 (22.2%) of teachers indicated that parents did not participate in pre-school decision making at all, 4 (44.4%) of them reported that parents rarely did so, whereas 3 (33.3%) of them confirmed that parents always participated in pre-schools’ decision making endeavors. Findings on participation in pre-school decision making show that the majority 4 (44.4%) of teachers confirmed that parents rarely participated in decision making, but there was no high difference between the number of those who confirmed rarely and always. This may be because some of the parents know the importance of pre-schools on their children’s education and development which motivates them to participate in decisions made for their children’s education.

Findings show that 5 (55.5%) of teachers reported that parents did not participate in pre-school funds management at all, 3 (33.3%) of them indicated that parents did so rarely and 1 (11.1%) of them reported that parents always participated. The findings show that the majority 5 (55.5%) of teachers confirmed that parents did not participate in funds management at all. Almost the same percentage 3 (33.3%) agreed that parents rarely participated. This implies that many pre-schools did not ensure that parents knew the priorities of the school yet they were the first sponsors of those schools. Tuyisenge, (2011)
on ECE curriculum implementation in Burera district, Rwanda, found out that parents removed their children from pre-schools and opted to wait to enroll them for free primary education when they were older. This means that they were misinformed about the benefit of their children’s education and schools could offer the most needed advice.

4.6.2 Teachers’ Perception on Parents’ involvement in communication activities

Involvement of parents in communication activities entailed discussion on child’s progress and behaviours, visiting the child’s school when invited by the teacher and allowing parents to ask questions. Table 4.12 presents the results on parents’ involvement in communication activities as reported by teachers.

**Table 4.12 Perception on Communication Activities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Activity</th>
<th>Not at all freq</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Rarely freq</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Always freq</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>N = 9 freq</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussing child’s progress and behaviours</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visiting the child at school when invited by the teacher</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>66.6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking teachers questions pertaining to school</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>66.6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.12 shows that 2 (22.2%) of teachers reported that parents never discussed their children’s progress and behaviours at all, 3 (33.3%) of them
indicated that parents rarely did so and 4 (44.4%) of them confirmed that parents always discussed their children’s progress and behaviours. On the other hand, 1 (11.1%) of teachers reported that parents did not visit their children at school at all when invited by the teachers, 2 (22.2%) of them confirmed that parents rarely did so, while 6 (66.6%) of them confirmed that parents always visited the school when invited by the teachers. In addition, 0 (0%) of teacher respondents reported that teachers never allowed parents to ask questions at all in pre-school, 6 (66.6%) of them reported that they rarely allowed parents to ask questions while 3 (33.3%) of them indicated that they always allowed parents to ask questions.

The above results show that the majority of the teachers confirmed that parents always discussed children’s progress as well as behaviors and also visited their children’s school. As mentioned earlier parents who see the importance of getting involved in their children’s education would always want to follow up their children’s progress or welfare at school. Arnold et al (2008) point out that for children to attain holistic growth and development, their success purely depends on the involvement of their parents and caregivers in offering appropriate nurturance. For example parents’ active involvement during the pre-school years has been associated with children’s pre-literacy development, acquisition of mathematical skills, well developed social skills and positive attitudes toward learning.
On allowing parents to ask questions in pre-school, the majority 6 (66.6%) of teachers confirmed that they rarely allowed parents to ask questions probably because there was no time spared for that activity or they feared being challenged by the parents. The above findings were supported by Abrams & Gibbs (2000), Chen & Chandler (2001) who revealed that teachers may actually fear parents’ questioning their professional competence or blame them for children’ problems. In addition, Goodall & Vorhaus (2011) revealed that parents contribute to their children’s education process in different position: some come with time, resources and existing memories behind them; others come with histories of harmful experiences and rightful suspicions about how their children will be treated. They may therefore interrogate the teacher if they suspected any mistreatment of their children by the teacher.

As stipulated by Deborah (2000), children are more successful in school when parents have a good relationship with their children’s teachers and are involved in the school. Regular communication between the parent and teacher could thus motivate children to excel in school, produce better school attendance and improve behavior at home and at school. How teachers and parents interact has a strong impact on teacher turnover. Thus where there is no interaction like in poor and minority schools, the impact could be devastating. In addition, good communication with families and parents may make them feel that they are part of the school community as they are kept aware of school events, important school information like curriculum activities, assessment,
achievement level and reporting methods. This way, parents receive information on how to support their children.

4.6.3 Teachers’ Perception of Parents’ Involvement in Provision of Voluntary Service

Providing services like volunteering in building classrooms, engaging in hygienic related activities and participating in feeding programs at school are some of the ways parents get involved in their children’s school. Table 4.13 presents the results of the teacher respondents on parents’ involvement in provision of the above activities.

Table 4.13 Perception on Voluntary Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Activity</th>
<th>Not at all frq</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Rarely frq</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Always frq</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>N = 9</th>
<th>Tot %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Building classrooms</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>55.5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hygiene related</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeding program at school</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>55.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paying pre-school fees</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>88.8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.13 shows that 3 (33.3%) of teachers reported that parents did not volunteer in building classrooms at all, 5 (55.5%) of them reported that parents rarely volunteered in doing so and 1 (11.1%) of them reported that parents always volunteered in building classrooms. Similarly, 3 (33.3%) of teachers reported that parents did not volunteer in hygienic related activities at all, 4
(44.4%) of them reported that parents rarely did so while 2 (22.2%) of them reported that parents always volunteered in hygienic related activities. 2 (22.2%) of teachers confirmed that parents did not participate in feeding program at all, 5 (55.5%) of them confirmed that parents rarely participated while 2 (22.2%) of them confirmed that parents always participated in feeding program at school.

These findings show that the majority 5 (55.5%) of teachers confirmed that parents rarely involved themselves with voluntary activities and about 5 (55.5%) of them confirmed that parents rarely participated in feeding programs at school. The implication is that the school most probably did not involve them in voluntary activities because parents were only requested to contribute money to finance major activities.

The results show that 1 (11.1%) of teachers indicated that parents did not pay school fees at all for their children while 8 (88.8%) of them reported that parents always paid. This could be because all pre-schools were private and only two were public in the whole country. This means that parents who enroll their children in pre-school must sponsor their children’s education themselves without relying on the government. The small number 1 (11.1%) who confirmed that parents did not pay school fees at all may indicate that their children were being sponsored by some charitable organizations.
In relation to interview results, pre-school teachers and head teachers supported the above findings. One of the teacher interviewees reported that “*parents participate in activities that request them to contribute money only and many times their maids participated on their behalf because they were full time workers*”. The majority 5 out of 6 head teachers confirmed negative relationship between parents and teachers. In regard to the negative relations, one of them lamented that “*the causes were the non reservation of appropriate time for parents to ask teachers about their children’s education. In addition, it was reported that even teachers did not have skills on how they could work together with parents*”.

Margaret & Leer (2012) emphasize the importance of the school in promoting involvement of parents in school-based settings. Voluntary opportunities were usually among the first ways those parents and the school personnel that may be used to promote parents’ involvement. In other words, recruiting and organizing volunteering support of school events could be truly helpful to teachers in increasing community awareness of the school, its mission and issues teachers faced.

**4.7 Findings on Strategies used by the School to Promote PI in pre-school**

Concerning the last objective, parents and pre-school teachers were asked to indicate their suggestions on the strategies that could be used by the school to promote parents’ involvement in pre-schools. Table 4.14 presents the results on
parents’ views on strategies that could be used by the school to promote parents’ involvement in pre-school.

Table 4.14 Parents’ views on Strategies Schools could use to Promote PI in pre-school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Frequency: n=110</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The PTA committee members encouraging parents to make follow up with their children’ learning</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>17.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The school staff welcoming parents and allowing them to ask questions in pre-school</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The school staff inviting parents to participate pre-school funds management</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>20.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The school providing parents with training opportunity about their responsibilities in their children’ education</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>26.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The school staff providing information about children’ progress</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>110</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.14 indicates that 19 (17.2%) of parents reported that the PTA committee members encouraged parents to follow up their children’s progress. This could be because there was nobody from school to remind them on their responsibilities over their children’s education. On the other hand, 21 (19%) reported that when the school staff welcomed parents and allowed them to ask questions, their involvement could be fruitful. As mentioned earlier teachers did not allow parents to ask questions probably to protect themselves from being challenged by the parents as some of them were not qualified in ECE as shown in table 4.3 on teacher qualifications. In addition, 23 (20.9%) of parent
respondents suggested that they should be invited by the school staff to participate in school funds management. Parents probably suggested this because they knew that they were not merely guests but sponsors of those schools. Therefore they needed to be included in management committees.

On providing parents with training about their responsibilities in their children’s education, a total of 29 (26.3%) felt training about their responsibility in school was necessary. This means that parents did not participate in such activities because they were not sure of their responsibility or how to participate. On the other hand, 18 (16.3%) suggested that providing information about their children’s progress by the school staff could improve the level of their involvement. This could be because parents probably only got information when teachers were requesting them to contribute some money.

The findings from the interview with pre-school teachers on strategies that could be used to boost parents’ participation in their pre-school children’s education show that majority 7 out of 9 of them suggested that they could visit parents at home, to see what was done in their homes. Another suggestion made was that encouragement of parents to visit their children at school could increase their involvement. If parents were allowed to visit their children at school it would motivate them to appreciate that they were valuable and it could make communication about the child’s progress easier. As one of the pre-school teachers suggested, “the school could organize academic day so
that the school could sharpen parents’ minds about their responsibilities in their children’s pre-school education”. Another view was to encourage parents to allow children to participate in games. This is because many parents think that learning in pre-school involves reading, writing and counting only but they do not know that children learn through play and creativity. Lastly, majority 6 out of 9 of pre-school teachers suggested that the school could mobilize parents about their responsibilities within the school and home in order to enable them run their children’s pre-school education well.

In the interview with head teachers, all of them (6) agreed with the suggestions made by parents and pre-school teachers. One of them pointed out that “when there is good communication between the school and parents, parents will be more involved because they feel that they are welcome to school and would be willing to support their children’s education. In addition, establishing regular communication with the parents, organizing school activities where parents had to play a key role like workshops and providing them with training to equip them with early childhood education skills could really improve parents’ involvement in pre-schools”.

The findings were consistent with the study of Deborah (2000) who indicated that some strategies that could be used to encourage positive parenting were: surveying responses from parents about the information and workshops they would find most helpful; consulting with parents and others in the community
about their preferences as well as the best ways to translate or modify messages to all parents and establishing home visiting programs. This is because when teachers visit parents in the home, teachers could share with them school and classroom expectations, and parents could share information about home situations that might affect their children’s achievement; offer school space where parents could share their parenting successes and challenges and gain knowledge to enhance their parenting skills.
CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction
This chapter discusses the summary of the study based on the study objectives. The implications from the findings and general conclusions are drawn. Recommendations to different stakeholders as well as suggestions for further research are also presented.

5.2 Summary of findings
The findings of the present study were derived from six key areas stated in the above objectives.

5.2.1 Parents’ Involvement in their Pre-school Children’s Education
The findings in this key area shows that majority of the parents agreed that they always bought pre-school materials for their children which means that parents in urban areas have high expectations and are always committed in supporting their children’s pre-school education. The findings show that the majority of parent respondents confirmed that they rarely purchased story books for their children. This could be because they were not actively involved in pre-school curriculum activities and also the belief that their children were not yet ready to read a book. The findings show that the majority of parents always gave presents to their children for good performance. Generally parents in urban areas are educated and have good monthly earning and they know the
importance of motivation and thus the provision of positive reinforcement for their children through presents.

On parents telling stories to their children, the findings clearly show that the majority of them rarely did so. This could be as a result of over engagement in work activities and fatigue after work. The findings also show that the majority of parent respondents confirmed that they rarely commented or remarked on their children’s progress and similarly, the majority of them confirmed that they always disciplined their children. This implies that parents considered commenting on their children’s progress and disciplining them to be their major responsibility.

The findings also indicate that quite a good number of parent respondents confirmed that they rarely taught their children how to read or helped them to do homework or checked if the school work was done by the child. There were a small percentage of respondents who confirmed that parents did not perform the above listed activities at all. This implies that parents were either very busy or they left those activities to be performed by the teachers.

On praising their children for good performance, the findings indicate that parents either rarely or always praised their children for good performance. This implies that when parents are involved in reinforcing their children, this motivates the minors to work harder (Ondieki, 2012). The findings also
indicate that the majority of parent respondents confirmed that they rarely listened carefully to their children when talking to them. The reason could be because they were always busy and tired with other activities to sustain their families. However, a relatively small percentage of parent respondents confirmed that they always listened carefully to their children when talking to them. This percentage may represent those who were aware of the importance of listening to their children when they talked to them.

The findings similarly show that majority of parent respondents reported that they rarely answered their children’s questions effectively. This could probably be due to the kind of questions children asked and whether they were related to the child’s age and further, whether parents were able to answer those questions or not.

The results also show that the majority of parent respondents agreed that they rarely ate together with their children. That could be a result of cultural beliefs which is common among African communities or a family’s decision that children may or may not eat together with their parents. It could also imply that parents did not share supper with children because by the time they arrived home from work, their children were already asleep.

The findings further show that majority of parents rarely made play materials with their children, probably because parents were not informed of the
importance of play for young children in general and therefore did not see it necessary to engage in making play materials for them. It could also be due to the fact that some parents saw play as a waste of time and that children should instead concentrate in reading and doing academic work. However, the small percentage of parent respondents confirmed that they always made play materials with their children. This implies that parents who see play as a contribution to the child’s development and as a way of learning will get involved in making play materials with their children. The findings indicate that many parents did not find it necessary to play with their children while a few of them got involved in their children’s play because they knew its importance on the development of the child.

On the question as to whether parents prayed with their children, the findings show that majority of them rarely prayed together with their children. This could probably be due to the fact that parents were always busy in their daily work or parents themselves did not appreciate prayers or they might not know its importance. However a small percentage of parent respondents confirmed that they always prayed together with their children. This means that some parents considered that spiritual intervention was needed for success in the life of the child.

On causes of poor participation in shared activities in pre-school, head teachers highlighted the following causes: poor participation could be due to poor
parenting styles, lack of knowledge to do so and skills and lack of time because of their businesses. Further, they moderately participated in other activities. The implication of the above findings was that parents always participated in activities that requested them to support their children financially. They also moderately participated in other activities because they had challenges in trying to combine their daily business and seeking time to follow up their children’s education.

5.2.2 Parents’ Socio-economic Status

In studying socio-economic status of parents, the findings showed that the majority of parent respondents confirmed that they earned 40,000 (62.5 dollars) - 69,000 Rwf (107.8 dollars) and (27.2%) of them had even a higher income which could be because, Gasabo District is located in the city, where there were job opportunities. In addition, many people in the city do business and this is among the economic activities that generate income in the cities. This could be the reason why parents in Gasabo District were able to support their children’s education and also sustain themselves financially.

5.2.3 Parents’ Level of Education

Based on the findings, it may be concluded that majority of the parent respondents in Kacyiru and Rusororo sectors had secondary education and also a good number of them had university education.
The findings from the interview with pre-school teachers indicated that parents’ level of education could improve parents’ involvement as shown in the following utterances from teachers: “parents’ level of education increases income in families; educated parents are able to get a job and perform it well. They also added that educated parents have high expectation and awareness on importance of education”. The findings from the interview with head teachers linked parents’ involvement with their level of education. One of the head teachers emphasized this in the following words: “the link is observed through the follow up educated parents do every day when they came back home to their children from work. For instance they always ask and continuously collect information about the progress of their children while uneducated parents do not make much effort regarding their children’s progress”. They also reported that when parents are educated they have job opportunities that increase the income in their families which ultimately enabled them to support their children’s education.

5.2.4 Teachers’ views on parents’ Involvement

The findings show that majority of teachers confirmed that parents did not participate at all in PTA activities probably because they were always busy with their daily activities including their jobs or PTA did not exist in their children’s pre-schools. However, a small percentage of teachers revealed that they always participated in PTA. This implies that parents who consider PTA
to be important on their children’ learning will participate in PTA pre-schools where they existed.

The findings from teachers further show that majority of parents rarely attended meetings probably because they felt that their house maids could attend on their behalf since the parents are full time workers. A good number of teachers however confirmed that some of the parents always attended meetings. This may most probably be because they valued their provision of moral support towards their children’s education as important.

The findings also show that majority of teachers confirmed that parents did not participate in pre-school curricula. This could probably be because some teachers might not have been aware that parents were expected to participate when pre-school curriculum was being revised. Parents on their part most probably considered that it was the task of the school to implement the curriculum without consulting them. A small percentage of teachers showed that parents always participated in the provision of pre-school curriculum activities. This implies that some schools may have trained staff who involved parents to participate in pre-schools because they were aware of its value.

Findings on participation in pre-school decision making as a monitoring activity showed that the majority of teacher respondents confirmed that they rarely participated in decision making, but there was no big difference between
the percentages of those who confirmed they rarely or always participated. This could be because some of the parents know the importance of pre-school on their children’s education and development which motivates them to participate in decisions made for their children’s education.

The findings further show that the majority of teachers confirmed that they did not participate in pre-school’s funds management at all. Almost the same percentage agreed that parents rarely participated. This implies that many pre-schools did not ensure that parents know the priorities of the school as first sponsors of those schools.

The results from teachers similarly show that parents always discussed children’s progress as well as behaviours and visited their children’s schools. As mentioned earlier parents who see the importance of getting involved in their children’s education would always want to follow up their children’s progress or welfare at school. On allowing parents to ask questions in pre-school, the majority of teacher respondents confirmed that they rarely allowed parents to ask questions probably because there was no time reserved for that activity or they did not want to be challenged by the parents.

The findings from teachers also show that parents rarely involved themselves with voluntary activities and similarly, rarely participated in feeding programs at school. The implication is that the pre-schools do not involve the parents in
voluntary activities. The reason could be that parents were most probably only requested to contribute money to finance major activities.

In addition, the findings show that majority of teachers reported that parents always paid school fees for their children. This could be because all pre-schools in this region are private and only two are public in the whole country. This means that parents who enroll their children in pre-school must be prepared to sponsor their children’s education themselves without relying on the government. The small percentage who confirmed that parents did not pay school fees at all may indicate that their children were probably being sponsored by some charitable organizations.

In view of interview results, pre-school teachers and head teachers had similar opinions. One of the teacher interviewees presented these sentiments in the following words: “parents participated in activities that requested them to contribute money only and many times their house maids participated on their behalf because they are full time workers”. In regard to the relations between parents and teachers, one of the head teachers lamented that “the causes were the non provision of appropriate time reserved for parents to ask teachers about their children’s education. In addition, it was reported that even teachers did not have skills on how they could work together with parents”.

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5.2.5 Strategies that can Promote Parents’ Involvement in Pre-schools

The study also provided the information on what could be done by the school staff to promote involvement of parents. Some schools suggested that working closely with parents in the schools could promote PI. This could be done by providing them with knowledge and skills through trainings. The school staff further suggested that encouraging parents to follow up their children’s education through parent teacher association could similarly boost PI in pre-schools.

The findings from the interview with pre-school teachers on strategies show that majority of them suggested that they could visit parents at home to see what was done in their homes as a way to improve PI in pre-schools. In addition, encouragement of parents to visit their children at school could increase their involvement. If parents were encouraged to visit their children at school it would motivate them to appreciate that they were valuable and it could make communication about the child’s progress easier. One of the pre-school teachers suggested that, “the school could organize academic day so that the school always sharpens parents’ minds about their responsibilities in their children's pre-school education”. Another view was to encourage parents to allow children to participate in games. This is because many parents think that learning in pre-school involves reading, writing and counting only but they did not know that children learn through play and creative activities. Lastly, majority of pre-school teachers suggested that the school could mobilize
parents about their responsibilities within a school and at home in order to enable them run their children’s pre-school education appropriately. In the interview with head teachers, all of them (6) supported the suggestions of parents and pre-school teachers. One of them pointed out that “when there is good communication between the school and parents, the parents will be more involved because they would feel that they were appreciated or welcome to school and would be willing to support their children’s education. Further, one of the head teachers added that, establishing regular communication with the parents, organizing school activities where parents had to play a key role like workshops, providing training to parents concerning equipping them with early childhood education skills could really improve parents’ involvement in pre-schools”.

**5.3 Conclusion**

Findings showed that parents were mostly involved in buying pre-school materials and giving presents to their children for good performance. At the same time, poor parenting styles, lack of knowledge and skills as well as lack of time because of business were found to be the causes of poor participation of parents in their children’s education.

Parents’ socio-economic status was found to influence parents’ involvement in their children’s education. Parents in Gasabo District were found to be able to support their children’s pre-school education and sustain themselves
financially. This was made possible by the fact that Gasabo District is located in the city where many opportunities like jobs and business were available and these influenced the parents’ social wellbeing.

Findings further revealed that teachers perceive parents as participating more in activities that require them to contribute money only. On the side of the school, it was also revealed that no time was reserved for discussion between parents and teachers about their children’s education and pre-school teachers were found not to be quite skilled in working with parents.

It emerged that parents’ level of education could improve parents’ involvement. Parents’ level of education increases income in families because educated parents are the ones who can get jobs and thus sustain their families. Educated parents also have high expectations and awareness on the importance of their children’s education.

In relation to the strategies that could promote parents’ involvement, it was suggested that pre-school should organize academic day in order to sharpen parents’ minds about their responsibilities in their children’s pre-school education such as establishing regular communication with parents and organizing school activities like workshops where parents would play a key role.
5.4 Recommendations

A range of recommendations were drawn from the findings of the study for various stakeholders and for further research.

5.4.1 Policy Recommendations

i) The findings revealed that a good number of pre-school teachers were not qualified in ECE and this was an obstacle because they lacked skills in how to work with parents. Therefore, it is recommended that the government should organize in-service trainings for pre-school teachers since the pre-service training recently started in TTC’s has not borne products yet.

ii) The findings on teachers’ perception on parents’ involvement showed that a number of parents did not participate in some home and school activities because they did not know it was their responsibility to do so. It is therefore recommended that the Ministry of Education in collaboration with the Ministry of local Government should reinforce adult literacy programmes in the city where parents would be sensitized on their roles and responsibilities.

iii) The findings on parents’ involvement revealed that parents participated more in pre-school activities that related to financial support and less in those that required them to sacrifice their time. Therefore, there is need to increase parents’ awareness on the importance of getting involved in early childhood education and this could be done by encouraging parents to attend “Akagoroba
k’Ababyeyi” which factually means “the evening for parents”. During the event, parents gather in the afternoon or early evening where they discuss issues relating to the welfare of their children and families. Local leaders should be responsible for reinforcing the event.

5.4.2 Recommendations for Further Research

i) The present study focused on parents’ involvement in pre-school education. There is need to extend the study from pre-school level to the lower primary school to find out whether the situation is similar or different.

ii) A study could be carried out to establish whether mothers and fathers were involved equally in their children’s pre-school education in Rwanda.

iii) The study targeted urban and rural settings of Gasabo District. A specific study on parents’ involvement in rural and remote areas could be conducted to see the real image of their involvement.
References


previous draft circulated as W.E Upjohn Institute Staff Working Paper No 99-58.


NCDC (2006). Early childhood development curriculum and guide: pre-natal development to the age of six years (Book 6), Kigali, NCDC


APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Research Instruments

Appendix 1A: Questionnaire for Parents

Dear Respondent,

The study seeks to find out factors that influence parents’ involvement in their children’s pre-school education. You have been identified as one the participants in this study. Kindly fill this questionnaire for me. The information you give will be treated as confidential and will be used for purposes of this study.

Instructions:

- Put a tick (v) in the appropriate box
- Fill in the provided space with needed information

Section A: Demographic data

Q1. What is your gender? Male ☐ Female ☐

Q2. What is your occupation? (Job)

Farmer ☐
Business ☐
Teacher ☐
Local Government ☐
Section B: General Questions on Parents’ Involvement

Socio-Economic Status of Parents

Q3. Approximately how much do you earn per month in Rwf (Rwandan francs)? (1,000 Rwf= approximately 1.6 dollar)

0 - 10,000 Rwf
11,000 - 39,000 Rwf
40,000 - 69,000 Rwf
70,000 -100,000+ Rwf

Parents’ involvement in their pre-school children’s education

Q4. Using the following terms below, indicate how you participate in your child’s pre-school in each of the activities listed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Buying pre-school materials for the child</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchasing story books to read for children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping the child to do homework</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checking if the school work is done by the child</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eating together with the child</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making play materials with the child</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playing together with the child</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Praying together with the child</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Praising the child for good performance
Listening carefully when the child is talking
Telling stories to the child
Commenting on child’s progress
Effectively answering the child’s questions
Disciplining the child
Teaching the child how to read
Giving the child a present for good performance

**Parents’ Level of Education**

Q5. Indicate your educational level:

- No formal education
- Primary certificate
- Secondary certificate
- University degree
Strategies used to promote Parents’ Involvement in Pre-schools

Q6. Suggest the strategies that could be used by the school in order to improve parents’ involvement in pre-schools.

............................................................

............................................................

............................................................
Appendix 1B: Translated questionnaire for parents in Kinyarwanda language

Ibibazo bigenewe ababyeyi

Babyeyi,

Turimo gukora ubushakashatsi bugamije kureba uruhare rw’ababyeyi mu myigire y’abana babo mu mashuri y’incuke. Muri ubu bushakashatsi twabatoranije kugirango mudufashe gusobanukirwa n’urwo ruhare rw’ababyeyi akaba ari yo mpamvu twabasabaga kudusubiriza ibibazo biri ku mugereka w’iyi baruwa. Tubijeje ko ibisubizo mutanga bizakoreshwa muri ubu bushakashatsi gusa kandi bikagirwa ibanga.

Tubaye tubashimiye.

Amabwiriza:

- Shyira akamenyetso ka (v) mu kazu gahuje n’igisubizo utanze
- Shyira ibisubizo byawe mu mwanya wateganyijwe.
Section A: Umwirondoro

1. Igitsina: Gabo □ □ Gore □ □

2. Umurimo ukora:
   Umuhinzi □
   Umucuruzi □
   Umwarimu □
   Umuyobozi mu nzego z’ibanze □

Section B: Ibibazo rusange ku ruhare rw’ababyeyi

Ikiciro cy’ubukungu bw’ababyeyi

3. Winjiza amafaranga angahe ku kwezi ?
   0 -10,000 □
   11,000-39,000 □
   40,000-69,000 □
   70,000-100,000+ □

Uburyo ababyeyi barera abana

4. Ukuresheje amagambo akurikira erekana uburyo ugira uruhare mu bikorwa bikurikira bikorerwa ku ishuri ry’incuke umwana wawe yigaho.
   ✓ Nta na rimwe
   ✓ Gake cyane
   ✓ Buri gihe
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Nta na rimwe</th>
<th>Gake cyane</th>
<th>Buri gihe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kugurira umwana ibikoresho by’ishuri</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kugurira abana ibitabo byo gusoma</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gufasha umwana gukora umukoro wo mu rugo yahawe na mwarimu.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kugenzura niba umwana yakoze umukoro</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kwishyura amafaranga y’ishuri</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gusangira ifunguro n’umwana</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gufatanya n’umwana gukora ibikinisho</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gukina n’umwana</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gufatanya n’umwana gusenga</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gushimira umwana igihe yakoze neza</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gutega amatwi umwana igihe avuga</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kubwira umwana udukuru dutandukanye</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gutanga ibitekerezo ku myigire n’imitsindire y’umwana.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gusubiza neza ibibazo umwana abajije.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gutoza umwana ikinyabupfura</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gutoza umwana gusoma</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guha umwana agahembo igihe yakoze neza.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Amashuri ababyeyi bize**

5. Garagaza amashuri wize:  
- Nta na rimwe
- Amashuri abanza
- Amashuri yisumbuye
- Kaminuza

**Ingamba ishuri ryakoresha mu kuzamura uruhare rw’abyeyi mu burere bw’abana babo mu mashuri y’incuke**

6. Tanga inama ku ngamba ubona ishuri ryakoresha mu kuzamura uruhare rw’ababyeyi mu burere bw’abana babo mu mashuri y’incuke.

..............................................................................................................................
Appendix 1C: Interview for Pre-school Teachers

Dear Respondent,

The study seeks to find out factors that influence parents’ involvement in pre-school in Gasabo District. You have been identified as one the participants in this study. Kindly fill this questionnaire for me. The information you give will be treated as confidential and will be used for purposes of this study.

Instructions:

- Put a tick (v) in the appropriate box
- Fill in the provided space with needed information

Section A: Demographic data

1. What is your gender?    Male [ ]  Female [ ]

2. What is your qualification?
   O’ Level certificate [ ]
   A’ Level certificate [ ]
   Diploma in ECE [ ]
   Others, please specify ..........................................................
   ......................................................................................
Section B: General Question on Parents’ Involvement

Q3 How would you rate the household monthly income of children’s parents in your class?

Low □ Moderate □ High □

Q4 Describe some school-related activities that parents in your pre-school get involved in.

........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................

Q5. Indicate by ticking how frequently parents in your pre-school participate in the under listed school activities.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Not at all Frq %</th>
<th>Rarely Freq %</th>
<th>Always Freq %</th>
<th>Tot %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent teacher association (PTA)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School meetings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-school curricula</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-school decision-making</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School funds management</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussing child’s progress &amp; behaviours</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visiting the child at school when invited by the teacher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking teachers questions pertaining to school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteering</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building classrooms</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hygiene related</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School feeding program</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paying pre-school fees</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q6 Do you think parents’ level of education could improve parents’ involvement in their pre-schoolers education?

Yes ☐  No ☐

If yes how? .........................................................................................................................
Q7 What are the strategies that could be used by the school to improve parents’ involvement in pre-schools?
Appendix 1D: Interview for Pre-school Head teachers

Dear Respondent,

The study seeks to find out factors that influence parents’ involvement in pre-school in Gasabo District. You have been identified as one the participants in this study. Kindly fill this questionnaire for me. The information you give will be treated as confidential and will be used for purposes of this study.

A. Demographic Data

1. What is your gender? Female ☐ Male ☐

2. What is your academic qualification?
   - O’ Level ☐
   - A’ Level ☐
   - Diploma ☐
   - Others, please specify .............................................

B. General Questions on Parents’ Involvement

3. How would you rate the household monthly incomes of children’s parents in your school?
   - Low ☐
   - Moderate ☐
4. Rate the relationship between parents and teachers in your pre-school?

   High  
   
   Negative  
   Positive  

   If Negative why? ............................................................................................
   ..................................................................................................................
   ..................................................................................................................

5. Do parents in your pre-school participate in their children's education?

   Yes  
   No  

   If not, what the causes behind their poor participation?
   ..................................................................................................................
   ..................................................................................................................

6. Would you link parents’ involvement in pre-school with their level of education?

   Yes  
   No  

   If Yes how? .................................................................................................
   ..................................................................................................................

7. What could the school do to increase parents’ involvement in pre-schools?

   ..................................................................................................................
   ..................................................................................................................
## Appendix 2: Budget

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STAGES</th>
<th>ACTIVITIES</th>
<th>Ksh</th>
<th>Rwf</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proposal writing</td>
<td>Typing and printing services</td>
<td>8,000</td>
<td>64,000 (100$)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Photocopying</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>12,000 (18.75$)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Telephone services</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>16,000 (25$)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Internet services</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>16,000 (25$)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Collection</td>
<td>Travelling: Kigali-Nairobi</td>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>480,000 (750$)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transport: Rwamagana-Kigali (field research)</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>160,000 (250$)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Telephone services</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>40,000 (62.5$)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data analysis</td>
<td>Telephone services</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>24,000 (37.5$)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Miscellaneous expenses</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>120,000 (187.5$)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>116,500</td>
<td>932,000 (1456.25$)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 3: Work Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERIODS</th>
<th>ACTIVITIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August-December/2013</td>
<td>Proposal writing and feedback from supervisors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December-January/2014</td>
<td>Proposal presentation at department level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January-February/2014</td>
<td>Making corrections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February-May/2014</td>
<td>Application for research permit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2014</td>
<td>Research Permit granted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June/2014-July/2014</td>
<td>Data collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July/2014-August/2014</td>
<td>Data analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August-September/2014</td>
<td>Submission of the first draft to the department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September-October/2014</td>
<td>Submission of the second draft to the department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November/2014</td>
<td>Submission of the Thesis to the School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov./2014-March/2015</td>
<td>External Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April-May/2015</td>
<td>Defense of the thesis at School Level and corrections as well as submission of the final copy at the Post Graduate School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July/2015</td>
<td>Graduation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 4: Research Permit

REPUBLIC OF RWANDA

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
P.O BOX 622 KIGALI

Re: Permission to carry out research in Rwanda - No: MINEDUC/S&T/240/2014

Permission is hereby granted to Ms. Stephanie Twyisenge, a Master’s Candidate in Early Childhood Studies, Kenyatta University, Kenya, to carry out research on: "Parental Involvement in their Children’s Pre-School Education: A Case of Gasabo District, Kigali City, Rwanda".

The research will be conducted in Kacyiru and Ruviroro sectors, Gasabo District, Kigali City. The three (3) Pre-Schools will be selected in each sector mentioned above. The researcher will use the questionnaires addressed to Parents, Pre-School Head Teachers as well as Pre-School Head teachers. She will need also to interview the Head teachers of the selected Pre-Schools.

The period of research is from 10th June, 2014 to 10th June, 2015. This period may be renewed if necessary, in which case a new permission will be sought by the researcher.

Please provide Ms. Stephanie Twyisenge any support she may require in the course of conducting this research.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Marie Christine GASINGIRWA
Director General,
Science, Technology and Research
Ministry of Education