INFLUENCE OF PARENTS’ SOCIO ECONOMIC STATUS ON PERCEPTION OF QUALITY SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT IN PRE-PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN NAIROBI CITY COUNTY, KENYA

BY

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DECLARATION

I declare that this project is my original work and has not been presented for any award of degree in any university. This research project has been complemented by referenced sources duly acknowledged. Where text, data, graphics, pictures tables have been borrowed from other sources, which includes the internet they are specifically accredited and referenced through APA system in accordance to anti-plagiarism regulations.

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This project has been submitted for appraisal with my approval as university supervisor.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to my family, for the great support they accorded me while I was going through the tough process of coming up with this document. God bless them immensely
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First, I wish to thank the Almighty God for giving me the gift of life and the ability to conduct this study. Second, I acknowledge my supervisor, Dr. Nyakwara Begi for his professional support during the process of writing this document. I also wish to appreciate my family members for their great support as I was preparing this document. Lastly, I wish to convey a lot of gratitude to my friends and colleagues who have always given me moral support even when my spirit was down.
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**ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>AHDE</td>
<td>American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECDE</td>
<td>Early Childhood Development Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOEST</td>
<td>Ministry of Education, Science and Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NACOSTI</td>
<td>National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPSS-</td>
<td>Statistical Package for Social Sciences</td>
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<tr>
<td>U.K</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
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<td>U.S.A</td>
<td>United States of America</td>
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ABSTRACT
Pre-school environment is one of the major aspects that greatly determine the achievement of children in the learning process. School environment affects almost all indicators of quality learning process including health, psychological, emotional and behavioral aspects. However, the perception of preschool environment may differ depending on the parents’ social class. This study therefore, intended to establish whether parents’ perceptions of quality of preschool environment could be influenced by parents’ socio-economic status. The study employed the Social Exchange Theory to examine how perceptions of parents on quality of preschool environment are shaped by their socio-economic status namely: occupation, education and level of income. The study employed a comparative research design targeting 25 preschools, 1300 parents and 25 caregivers in Embakasi East Sub-county. A sample size of 130 parents and 16 caregivers from 16 preschools. Questionnaires were used to collect data from parents. The research instruments were subjected to reliability and validity tests in order to ensure accuracy and correctness of the information provided. Data were analysed descriptively using measures of central tendency and measures of dispersion. The data collected and analysed enabled the researcher to conclude on whether certain preschool environments by parents were influenced by their socio-economic status, hence the findings tend to benefit the management of the preschools, teachers, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and also the parents themselves. Parents had varied perceptions towards the quality of the pre-primary school environment as majority admitted that various factors influence their choice of school their children attend. From the study, it was evident that parents in most cases desire the best environment for their children as can be seen from their responses geared towards safe, secure, quality instructional materials, an all-round curriculum, qualified and competent teachers as well as schools which upheld high discipline standards. It was evident that parents of different occupations perceived the quality of pre-school differently with those in casual employment not having any major perceptions regarding the quality of pre-school environment. However, this difference in perception was not statistically significant hence it was concluded that occupation does not significantly influence the perception of parents in Embakasi sub-county in the quality of pre-primary school environment. It was also evident that parents with primary school education had the lowest means regarding their perceptions towards pre-primary school environment while those with degree education had highly varied views on the quality of pre-primary school environment. However, it was found that despite these differences, the perceptions of parents were not influenced by the parent’s level of education as the results were not statistically significant. Parents who participated in the study had different economic capabilities though majority were found to earn below ten thousand shillings every month. As such, it was observed that the perceptions on the quality of education was high among parents who earned more than forty thousand each month as compared to those earning less than ten thousand shillings. However, despite these findings which seem to indicate that parents earning more money have higher expectations on their perceived quality of pre-school environment, the statistical analysis revealed that the differences in mean across the various groups were not statistically significant. The study recommends that preschool management should be keener on the kind of school environment they expose children since it influences parents’ perception, though not significantly.
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This chapter presents background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research objectives, research questions, significance of the study, study assumptions, limitations and delimitations, theoretical framework, conceptual framework and operational definition of terms

1.2 Background to the Study

As early childhood education moves up front and at the core of public debates, consideration is being paid to early proficiency and how different partners view it. Early proficiency has for some time been perceived as vital in dialect and education preparation of youngsters to prevail in school and further down the road (Mwaura, Sylva and Malmberg 2008). In this way, the quality and viability of preschool conditions are essential for youngsters' learning procedures. The nature of the preschool condition is connected with scholarly accomplishment, diminished review maintenance, higher graduation rates and improved profitability (Nores, $ Barnett, 2010). The Reggio Emilia approach made by Loris Malaguzzi best compresses the association between the preschool condition and the school condition. The idea expresses that youngsters are capable students, and their advantage should control grown-ups on the choices made when outlining the class and playing condition and also materials for learning and playing to
augment their level of engagement. However, where children go to school is subject to their parents’ choice. Whether parents consider as important or less important, they will choose certain schools at the expense of the others. Basically, perceptions are shaped by various factors such as parents economy, level of education as well as the type of work they do (Homese, 2014).

The Oxford Dictionary seventh version characterizes the environment as the conditions that encompass somebody. Webster's New World College Dictionary additionally portrays it as the conditions, circumstances, and impacts surrounding and influencing the improvement of a living being or a gathering of living beings. The environment is additionally characterized as the mix of outside physical conditions that affect and impact the development, improvement, conduct, and survival of living beings by The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language. Along these lines, the preschool condition envelops the elements affecting the connection with indoor and outside exercises that offer open doors for youngsters to set objectives and hold on in completing the plans while obtaining new learning and aptitudes. These incorporate arranged directions, materials, outfitting, day by day schedules and relations amongst grown-ups and kids with kids. Moreover, nature ought to suit arranged and spontaneous and additionally organized and unstructured encounters.

Pre-school is optional in German Schools and unlike many other countries around the globe, children are placed in mixed-age classes. It is, therefore, common to find children aged between three to six years in one class. Homese (2014) found that the lack of high-quality pre-school environment in Germany is still rare and influences the children’s
academic skills especially due to its mixed-age classes. The study further determined that numeracy competency differs with the quality of the pre-school environments. The amount of space, also influence the learning outcomes according to New Jersey Department of Education (2014). The report states that most of the children who are physically challenged, English Language Learners and from disadvantaged backgrounds do not have access to quality preschool environment compromising its quest to ensure access to quality education. Moreover, the report cites that there existed a social class line when analysis was done on parents’ choice of schools. Parents who were categorized as economically well were found to choose schools based on environmental quality and availability of resources despite the fact that such schools were more expensive than others. This implies that perception on quality of preschool environment has been a factor of consideration when German parents choose the schools where they take their children. The same case is reflected in India and China where overcrowding and limited space prevents access to the quality environment (Nores, & Barnett, 2010).

Most of children’s decisions are influenced by their parents. The choice of schools they go when they are young will depend largely on their parents’ perception of such schools. A study done by Manfra, Carlo and Coggeshall (2015) in Columbia found that parents perception of the preschools where they took their children was largely determined by certain socio-demographic characteristics such as level of education and occupation. The study found out that most parents who were educated and had well-paying jobs make tendency of choosing similar class of schools while poor parents seemed to be swayed by cost to of education before taking their children there. Basically, poor and less educated
parents were found to take their children to poorly maintained schools, whose buildings were characterized by dilapidation and their environment generally polluted.

The school environment is greatly influenced by the safety of the pre-school environment. No meaningful teaching and learning can take place in an unsafe environment; hence, the government of Kenya through the Ministry of Education has safety standards and policies to ensure a safe and secure environment for learners and staff. According to the Safety and Health Manual (2008), it is illegal for teachers to use any form of violence whether physical, verbal or emotional on the learners. The same applies to learner-on-learner violence. The manual also stipulates that the school environment should be free of any hostility by accommodating the needs of its learners. Kopko (2014) argues that this can be done through proper demarcation of school ground, adequate and well-maintained facilities like toilets and sanitation facilities and adequate space for learning. These standards are further emphasized in the Kenya ECDE Policy Framework, (2006) which recognizes that the needs of children are complex and diverse hence the need for an environment that caters for their mental, physical, social, emotional, moral and spiritual needs. It calls on all stakeholders to act responsibly by providing a quality environment (Janus, & Offord, 2007).

Countries in Africa and mainly Sub-Saharan Africa have made progress in expanding their primary education as evidenced in Mozambique's increased enrollment by 50% between 1998 to 2010 (Kopko, 2014). However, entry to preschool is delayed and characterized by the lack of toys, books, furniture and other learning materials limiting maximum physical and cognitive growth necessary for adequate brain development.
Many countries including Uganda, Nigeria, and South Africa have developed policy frameworks that stipulate measures to organize and manage safety, but these measures have not been fully implemented (Janus, & Offord, 2007). For instance, the planning, safety, and use of the pre-school environment are the duty of school and community committees in charge of preschool education in most African Countries. They are mandated to ensure that resources are mobilized to ensure a safe, secure and caring environment that meets the learning needs of the children (Anders, Rossbach, & Weinert, 2012).

Current studies in Kenya show that preschool environments are lacking in aspects of infrastructure availability and accessibility of learning materials. As most preschools in the country are community owned, there is lack of adequate furniture apart from those sponsored by Non-Governmental Organizations (Anders, Rossbach, & Weinert, 2012). Studies further revealed that the furniture does not match the physical size and stature of children; hence is causes postural discomfort and pain. Pre-schools around the country also lack good quality instructional materials relevant to the experiences of pre-school children and related to their cultural and language acquisitions vital in stimulating interest and assisting in academic achievement (Early, Iruka, Ritchie, Barbarin, Winn, Crawford, 2010). Poor environmental health in the schools is also common leading to widespread infections from communicable diseases. ECD teachers were also found lacking in proper training to provide a sustaining school environment for the children (Wangari, 2014).

These studies provide tips on the quality of school environment in pre-school referencing the small enterprises across the country. However, these studies do not address the
instructional processes and how this aspect of pre-school environment influences the parents’ perception. Mwaura, Sylva, and Malmberg (2008) identified that safety, health, equity and inclusion are crucial elements that influence the preschool environment. These elements need to be effective, well-connected and cohesive to provide a quality school environment. Wangari (2014) conducted a study in Nairobi examining why children whose parents are illiterate are most likely not enrolled in pre-schools. However, none of these studies focused on the link between preschool environment and parents’ socio-economic status. It is within this background that this study intended to establish perceptions of the quality of preschool environment are influenced by parents’ socio-economic status.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Pre-school environment is one of the major aspects that greatly determine the achievement of the children in the learning process. School environment affects almost all indicators of quality learning process including health, psychological, emotional and behavioral aspects. However, the perception of preschool environment may differ depending on the parents’ social class. Davis-Kean (2005) explains that parents’ socio-economic status has been found to influence various aspects of child’s development including achievement in learning process. As such, there is likelihood that some children are greatly disadvantaged as a result of differences in their parents’ socio-economic characteristics. In the long run, some children fail to reach their full potential and hence achieve less in their lives. This study therefore, intended to establish whether perceptions on preschool environment could be influenced by parents’ socio-economic status.
Embakasi Sub-county is a metropolitan section of Nairobi County where people of different social class hail. The area has people with various occupations. Similarly, there appears to be preschools that attract children from certain social classes. For instance, parents from slum areas have been found to prefer similar preschools while those from well-developed sections tend to take their children to prestigious schools around. Barnett (2004) established that most pre-schools have caregivers and teachers of the same qualifications yet parents from different occupations prefer certain preschools to others. This study intended to establish whether different parents’ socio-economic status may have a role to play in perceptions of pre-school school environment.

1.3.1 Purpose of the Study

To establish parents’ perception, of the quality of school environment in pre-primary schools in Embakasi East Sub-county in Nairobi County. The study has also found out the influence of parents’ socio-economic status on perception of the quality of school environment in pre-primary schools in the sub-county.

1.3.2 Research Objectives

(i) To establish parents’ perception of the quality of school environment in pre-primary schools in Embakasi East Sub-county in Nairobi County.

(ii) To find out the influence of parents’ occupation on their perception of the quality of school environment in pre-primary schools in the sub-county.

(iii) To identify the influence of parents’ level of education on their perception of the quality of school environment in pre-primary schools in the sub-county.
(iv) To find out the influence of parents’ income on their perception of the quality of school environment in pre-primary schools in the sub-county.

1.3.3 Research Hypotheses

Hₐ1: There is a difference in parents’ perception of the quality of school environment in pre-primary schools across various categories of parents’ occupation.

Hₐ2: There is a difference in parents’ perception of the quality of school environment in pre-primary schools across various levels of parents’ education.

Hₐ3: There is a difference in parents’ perception of the quality of school environment in pre-primary schools across various categories of parents’ income.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The study may benefit various stakeholders involved in preschool children education and welfare. For instance, the Ministry of Education may use the findings to make policies regarding school environment in order to make it equitable to all children regardless of their parents’ occupations. The study may further help the preschool management to understand the reasons why some schools are preferred by some parents while other schools remain with inadequate learners. Parents may also benefit from the findings of the study since they will be in a position to understand how school environment may affect their perception when choosing schools. Additionally, preprimary teachers may benefit from the findings of the study in sense that they will understand the perceptions of
parents in the choice of pre-schools. Academicians may also use the findings of the study to enrich their literature and find knowledge gaps.

1.5 Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

1.5.1 Limitations

The study experienced challenges especially during data collection. This was occasioned by remote location of some preschools. Some respondents were also skeptical to provide information that tended to profile them in terms of occupations since people in informal sector lacked their job description. Accessing the parents was also quite difficult since the researcher lacked a formal gathering for them. To ensure these limitations did not affect the outcome of this study, the researcher made prior arrangements with the respondents and also sought permission from the workplace so that there was adequate time to visit all the expected schools.

1.5.2 Delimitations of the Study

The study was only conducted in Embakasi Sub-county; the area presents a good scenario where parents of different occupations are found. Moreover, there are different kinds of preschools in Embakasi, which makes it a suitable location for the study. The study further focused on parents’ socio-economic status and their perceptions on preschool environment since such connections had not been addressed by previous studies in Kenya.
1.6 Assumptions of the Study

The study assumed that parents of the preschool children had different social economic class. The study further assumed that parents had inherent perceptions regarding preschool environment. It was also assumed that respondents would provide true information that reflected their opinions and perceptions.

1.7 Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

1.7.1 Theoretical Framework

Parents’ perception of preschool environment corroborates well with Social Exchange Theory, by Sabatelli and Shehan (1993) which asserts that human behaviors are motivated by perceptions. According to the theory, human beings normally prefer to incur certain costs if they perceive that they will get a reward that is worth the cost. Personal interest plays a great role in influencing perceptions. Inside the parent-child relationship, kids' formative results, school readiness, and future accomplishments can be likened as parental prizes or youngsters' prizes offered out to their folks, which can likewise be called child rearing results in the social exchange discourse. Furthermore, parental status and perceived social class may influence their preference to incur cost in certain school environments as opposed to others. Sabatelli and Shehan (1993) argues that attitude, income and the type of work the parents engage into shape environmental perception.

Social exchange theory was also used by (Raschick and Ingersoll-Dayton 2004) to study adult children and aging parents’ exchange relationships to compare the costs and
rewards of taking care of aging family members or parents. The theory has however, been rarely applied to early childhood studies. This study explored the importance of this theory in this field.

The study employed social exchange theory to establish how parents’ socio-economic status is associated with perception of preschool environment. The study employed the tenets of the theory (costs and rewards) to determine the perceived expenses exhibited by parents of different socio-economic status in regard to preschools with different school environments. The study therefore, hypothesized that depending on occupations and education level of different parents, coupled with income received from such social economic status, parents would perceive preschool school environment as important, less important or not important at all.
1.7.2 Conceptual Framework

Independent variables  intervening variable  Dependent variable  Outcome

Parents’ occupation
✓ Formal employment
✓ Business person
✓ Jua kali sector
✓ Casual employment
✓ Farmer

Parents’ level of education
✓ None
✓ Primary level
✓ Secondary level
✓ College level
✓ University level

Parents’ income
✓ Low income
✓ Middle class
✓ High class

Parents’ perception on quality of school environment in pre-primary schools
• Safe
• Spacious
• Adequate learning materials
• Enough caregivers
• Attractive
• Well maintained

Availability of many preschools with different

Fig 1.1: Conceptual framework showing the influence of parents’ socio-economic status on perception of quality of school environment

Key

Study variables
Non-study variables
This study used conceptual frameworks which show the possible interlinks between parents’ social economic status and perception of school environment. The researcher further hypothesized that parents’ perception of environment could also be influenced by availability of preschools with different environments. Based on their perception, parents’ can either have positive or negative perception towards a certain preschool.

1.8 Operational Definition of Terms

**Environment** - Surrounding where children learn such as classroom, playground and nature of buildings.

**Parent’s Occupation**- The main economic activity of parents of preschool children who can be categorized as formal employment (permanent and pensionable as well as contract), business persons, Juw kali and casual employment

**Parents’ Income**-This is the level of parents earning categorized as low (<Ksh 20000), middle (Ksh 20,000 to 40,000) and high income earners (>40,000)

**Parents’ Level of Education**-This is the highest academic level a parent reached including primary, secondary, college and university levels

**Parents’ Perceptions of the Quality of School Environment in Pre-primary schools** – This is personal feeling of parents of preschool children regarding preschool school environment (This was measured using a tool developed by the Ministry of Education on perception of environmental quality).
Perception- This is the mental impression created when a person experiences or hear about something or somewhere.

Pre-primary- Early years of education where children to learn and develop before going to a primary school

Quality of School Environment- This is the ideal learning atmosphere as determined by its safety, space, availability of learning material, availability of caregivers, attractiveness and maintenance.

Quality- Processes and situations that influence children’s learning and environment

Socio-economic Status- Parents’ occupation, level of education and income

Caregiver- Preschool teachers tasked with instruction and taking care of the children while at school
CHAPTER TWO
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction
This chapter describes the literature reviewed to support the need for this study. The review has been guided by the study objectives. At the end of the literature, a summary has been provided detailing research gaps.

2.2 Quality of School Environment
In the U.S., the quality of childcare has been found to vary greatly with most programs falling into the "mediocre quality" category and very few falling into the "high quality" category (Cryer, Tietze, & Wessels, 2012). In addition to high quality care being limited in the U.S., high quality care is also something that tends to be out of most parents' budgets. Thus, it is incredibly important that parents are able to discern the relevant markers of quality in the childcare that is available and affordable because childcare quality matters for child growth, development, and learning in cognitive, social, and health domains.

While the importance of preschool environment quality is apparent for all children attending childcare, it is especially important for children from low-income and disadvantaged backgrounds (Scarr, 2016). Children from low-income families who attended high quality centers have higher achievement throughout schooling and higher wage earning as adults (Nores, 2005). Unfortunately, many of the childcare centers located in low-income neighborhoods are not of good or high quality standards. Raikes et
al. (2012) noted that this may result in low-income parents sending their children to centers they believe as having good education opportunities that are actually most likely low in quality.

Quality of school environment has been widely studied by different researchers, leading to almost similar conclusions in several findings. For instance, Shaari and Ahmad (2016) investigated the role of physical environment and its impact on children school readiness in Malaysian pre-schools. In this study, both qualitative and quantitative literatures were reviewed, focusing on literature between 1923 and 2016. After the resulting data was analyzed, the study revealed that different aspects of the physical environment significantly affected readiness of pre-school children in Malaysia. For instance, physical environment aspects such as size of classes affected effectiveness of instructions, where small classrooms led to overcrowding. This was also observed by Worthington (2008), who explained that ambient physical environment was essential for effective learning environment in pre-schools. However, this study had some gaps. For instance, it used secondary data as old as 1923, which might have limited the ability of getting up-to-date data that reflects the current situation. This was addressed by ensuring that this study focused on primary data that was collected directly from the field.

In another study, Ehibudu, Ijeoma, and Karibi (2017) investigated influences of some pre-school factors on academic performance of preschools in Port Harcourt City Local Government area of Rivers State, Nigeria. In this study, a descriptive correlation survey design was used, a preschool factor scale (PFS) was used as the tool for data collection, where a sample of 40 pupils was used as respondents. According to the findings of this
study, preschool environment significantly reflected pre-school experience and eventually affected the overall performance of the learners. This was supported by Owojori and Ojedokun (2013), whose study on level of child friendliness of nursery schools in Osun State revealed that the level of interactions among learners in nursery schools was largely influenced by environment, which consequently affected learners` achievements in nursery schools. As observed, this study used a seemingly small sample of respondents which affected its representativeness and accuracy of the findings. However, this was addressed in this study by using a sufficiently representative sample, increasing accuracy of the findings and generalization of the study findings.

Locally, Nyabate (2012) investigated factors that affected enrollment of learners in preschools within Mathare Division, Nairobi. In her study, a descriptive survey design was used, where a sample of 80 respondents was extracted from a target population of 800 head teachers, teachers, and parents. Questionnaire was used as the main tool for data collection, where the tool was standardized to collect different views from the three set of respondents. The findings of the study revealed that the environment status of the preschool determined the number of learners that enrolled, with pre-schools which has better environment reporting higher enrollment rates.

This was also explained in a study by Nganga (2009), whose findings indicated that learning environment was a major factor to consider for early childhood education as it presented challenges in that ability of learners to achieve educational goals. However, while this study was conclusive in its findings, it was conducted within the capital city,
whose demographics and general environment is quite different from several other pre-
schools within the country. Therefore, generalization of its findings would lead to lack of
effectiveness in application of its findings. However, this was not addressed in our study
as it was also conducted within the city, hence its findings can only be generalized in
other cities and major towns.

2.3 Parents’ Perception of the Quality of School Environment in Pre-primary
Schools

Perception is the mental impression created when a person experiences or hear about
something or somewhere (Roy, 2017). On the other hand, quality of school environment
is determined by its safety, availability of instructional resources and general location of
the school (Gordon et al. 2015).

Fouziya and Sarika (2009) conducted a study to assess parental perception towards
preschool environments in different learning centers in India. The study targeted 200
parents with equal representation of mothers and fathers and also children aged 3 to 6
years. Children learning in Anganwadi centers were compared with those of regular
centers. The study revealed that there existed no difference in perceptions of importance
of education, skills imparted to children in those centers and also on teaching
methodology. However, parents who took their children to Anganwadi held different
perceptions of school environment with those who took their children to other centers.
Anganwadi was a private center and was associated with proper health and hygiene
habits, better communication skills and development of pre-literacy skills as opposed to
those who attended regular centers. It was also established that parents whose children
attended regular preschools were not even aware of these aspects of preschool
environment. However, though this study provided important perception differences held by parents regarding preschool environment, there exist a gap on the profiling of these parents for instance on their occupations or other aspects.

An examination on parental attitudes and works in respect with association in inner-city basic and center schools in United States was directed by Epstein and Dauber (2010). The study incorporated 2300 parents of elementary and middle school children and focused its data collection majorly on parents’ attitude towards their children’s school. In this study, some parents reported concern on school environments where they took their children while others were not even concerned with environmental aspects of the schools. Moreover, a considerable proportion of parents reported that they would incur any cost to have their children attend certain schools provided they felt their children would get what they perceived to be good for them. A major aspect that came out clearly in this study was that some parents are sensitive on school environments attended by their children while others are either less concerned or have no concern at all. However, one aspect that is a concern of the current study but conspicuously unanswered by Epstein and Dauber (2010) is the reason why some parents were sensitive on school environments while others did not care. One of the premises of this examination was to analyze parental financial status as an indicator of school condition discernments.

The perception of parents in relation to quality of school environment has been invested in different studies eliciting different results. In one such study, Zhou and Li (2017) conducted a study to investigate variations in Chinese parental perceptions on the role of quality of environment in preschools and their impact on education quality. Parents were
targeted as the respondents, where 794 parents from 91 kindergartens were given questionnaires for responses. After data analysis, the findings revealed that parents in Chinese kindergartens perceived quality of environment as an important factor to consider as it had a relationship with the quality of education that a learner received. This was also explained in a study by Cu, Valcke, and Verndalinde (2016), whose study explained that quality of environment was important for pre-school learners as it impacted on the quality of education that learners received. However, the study did not target a specific region but several kindergartens scattered around the country, hence the findings could not be particularly identified with a specific region for applicability. However, our study focused on a specific region, which is essential for effective application of study findings and implementation of findings.

In a similar study, Daniels, Forinder, and Clarke (2016) investigated teachers’ and parent’s perceptions of preschool children’s lifestyles. The study used a descriptive survey design, where data was collected through six focus group discussions involving parents and teachers. According to the information discussed across teachers and parents, there was a collective perception that the quality of environment impacted differently on the performance of learners, hence it was essential to improve quality of environment in pre-schools. This was also reflected in a study by Yassel, Engelbrecht, Oswald, Eloff, and Swart (2007), which collected views of parents from South Africa and the U.S. The study explained that parents perceived that quality of preschool environment was an important factor to consider as it influenced performance of learners. However, this study used only focus groups for data collection, which might have clouded views of some parents.
This was addressed in our study by using questionnaires to get individual responses from parents.

While investigating determinants of parent’s satisfaction with the quality of pre-primary education in Ilala District, Tanzania, Libent (2015) employed a descriptive survey design, where 829 parents with children in pre-schools were used for the study. Data was collected using a four-point likert scale questionnaire. After data analysis, the findings revealed that parents considered several factors in order to conclude that the pre-school education met their quality criteria. For instance, the quality of education in preschools was majorly dependent on the quality of learning environment, which depended on the physical environment, interactions, and resources. Therefore, quality dimensions was an important factor that parents considered as essential for pre-school environment before enrolling their children in preschools. This was echoed by Manyama and Lema (2017), who argued that quality of pre-school is considered by parents as an important aspect of pre-school education quality. However, the study focused on several determinants; hence parents’ perception of quality of environment did not feature significantly in the study. This was addressed in our study, where parents’ perceptions on quality has been addressed as an important variable. Further, the study did not put into consideration views of any other education stakeholders, yet such input would significantly increase the scope of responses.

While issues of perception have been addressed in western countries to a large extent, the reason why parents in Africa, and more so in Kenya, would choose to take their children to certain schools no matter how expensive or cheap they are, is really unknown. The
literature reviewed is very scanty on this issue and little is actually available focusing on Kenya. This study was examining how parents’ perceptions could have been predicted by their socio-economic status.

2.4 Parents’ Socio-economic Status and Perception of the Quality of School Environment in Pre-primary Schools

Occupation is defined by Chi et al., (2017) as the means of earning a living. Dahari and Sabri bin Yan (2011) conducted an exploratory study to identify the occupational factors influencing their perception of pre-school school environment in Malaysia. The study targeted 162 parents who have pre-school children. Data gathering was done using questionnaires which were analyzed using multiple linear regression analysis. The study found that parents in the following professions; teaching, health sector, banking and insurance tend to select their preferred schools as per the quality of the school in terms of teacher’s qualifications, quality of teaching, facilities and infrastructures, hygiene and cleanliness and availability of transport. On the other hand, those in self-employment, small business owners only considered the affordability and proximity of the schools. This study identifies important factors that influence parent’s perceptions towards preschool choice depending on their occupations. Furthermore, the findings give essential base statistics on aspects and features of preschool training. However, the study employed a large number of variables and increasing the sample size to help improve the regression model results.

Hsu and Yuan-fang (2013) explored factors that affect parent’s choice of pre-schools based on questionnaire survey. The researchers targeted 380 respondents but only 342
questionnaires were valid for use in data analysis. The scientists utilized a factor examination based on the questionnaires returned using statistica 8.0 programming and a reaction relapse investigation was likewise completed. The study found that a high positive correlation in location and transportation, educational environment, facilities, hygiene influences the choice of pre-school environment. More specifically, the study found that labor-class parents’ perception of pre-school environment is based on the curriculum design that focused on both intellectual and non-intellectual developments. On the other hand, parents in white collar jobs prefer pre-schools that re-creates the value of schools education by ensuring safety, creativeness and growth opportunities for their children. They do this by selecting schools with safety measures, quality teaching facilities and playing equipment as well as the affluence of the school. The exploration embraced a poll study strategy rather than in-depth interview; henceforth, parent's remarks on the survey's decisions ought not to be gotten, making it difficult to talk about individual conditions. Therefore, more in-depth discussions should be conducted to gather more data to determine the potential factors that influence parent’s perception on pre-school choice.

In the past, parents typically chose schools de facto, depending on where they live, however, parents are now exercising explicit school choice depending on various issues. Goldring and Rowley (2016) sought to investigate the factors influencing parent’s perception of pre-school in the U.S.A. The qualitative interview-based study compared parent’s perception about pre-school environment based on their occupation. The study focused on the factors that influence parents’ choice of pre-school environment. Parents are mostly anxious about their children’s readiness to transit from home environment to
school. Therefore, they take various factors into consideration when selecting their preferred pre-school. The study targeted 300 parents composed of nurses, doctors, teachers, causal laborers, housekeepers, bankers and caretakers. The study established that social networks are crucial in determining the perception of parents on the various school environments in a certain area. For instance, the study identified that teachers, nurses, doctors and bankers have a more integrated social network and have similar perceptions regarding what they consider to be important for their children in pre-school environment. The parents consider safety, hygiene, quality of teachers and teaching, availability of transportation, school infrastructure and teaching resources. On the other hand, caretakers, housekeepers and other low-income group of parents considered factors like the proximity of the school to their place of work or residence and the school fee charged. The study helps clarify parent’s belief about pre-school school environment and what helps shape their perception and choice of preschool.

In a study to assess school characteristics, parents’ socio economic status, and culture as determinants of parent’s choice of school for their children, Huisman, Rani, and Smits (2010), used data for 70 000 children living in 439 districts of 26 states in India. According to the findings of this study, the level of income significantly determined the choice of preschools, whereby parents with considerably higher income considered factors such as available resources, location of the school, and availability of qualified teachers. This was echoed by Grogan (2011), who explained that parents with better socioeconomic status chose preschools with equally quality standard in relation to learning environment. However, the study investigated several other factors, hence
limiting the aspect of socio-economic status. However, this was addressed through analysis of this aspect as an objective by itself.

Further, while investigating possibilities and challenges in early childhood care in Madagascar, Park (2014) focused on access and parental choice in pre-schools in Toliara region. In this study, focus group discussions were used as tools for data collection, where 8 focus groups comprising of 26 different types of respondents were used. The respondents comprised of parents, teachers, government official and the civil society. According to the findings of this study, parents` socio-economic status determined their perception of the quality of pre-school environment. This was also observed in the study by Tuyisenge (2015), whose findings explained that the level of social-economic status determined the definition of quality of pre-school environment. However, this study was limited by a number of factors. First, it constituted a considerably low number of respondents despite the fact that it had several kinds of respondents. Further, the study only used one technique for data collection, focus group discussions, which limited the ability to get an honest individual opinion form every respondent. These challenges were adequately addressed in our study, whereby we used an adequate and representative sample, while the use of questionnaires ensured collection of individual responses from the participants.

A study conducted by Achieng (2015) to investigate effects of parental financial status on preschool children attendance in Mukuru Kayaba Slums in Nairobi elicited similar sentiments. In this study, the researcher used both purposive and random sampling to sample 284 parents and children enrolled in 7 ECD centers in the study area. Both semi-
structured interviews and key informant interviews were used to interview the parents, teachers, head teachers and education officer. Quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS version 22 while quantitative data was analyzed by MAXQDA version 12. The study indicated that socioeconomic status guided the manner in which parent’s perceived that quality of education, where socio-economically stable parents preferred safe and secure preschools with adequate resources as the ones with quality environment. Parents with better socio-economic status within the society perceived that quality of pre-school environment significantly affected the overall outcome of education in several ways compared to those who had poor social-economic status within the society. As such, the choice of pre-schools differed, with parents with better social economic status considering several factors such as physical location, safety, availability of resources, and adequate qualified teachers as predictors of quality preschool environment. This was also shown by Katwii (2016), whose study explained that socio-economic status of parents affected their perception in relation to quality of school environment in preschools. However, the study was limited by the sample, where a relatively small sample was used. Our study corrected this by using and adequate and representative sample.

2.5 Parents’ Level of Education and Perception on the Quality of School Environment in Pre-primary Schools

According to Lee (2017), the level of education is the highest academic achievement a person has achieved at a certain point in time. According to Ceglowski & Bacigalupa (2002), parental education level determines many aspects in preschool life. These aspects are determined by the choices they make regarding their children. For instance, the study explains that parents whose education level is advanced tend to be more conscious in
regards to where they take their children to school. However, their studies do not peg
certain level of education to specific perceptions, but there is a consensus that parents’
level of education influences their perceptions of preschool school environment. In this
study, the researcher will try to establish the specific levels of education as well as try to
relate them to the quality of preschool environment adopted.

The parental educational level is an essential indicator of kids' training and behavioral
results (Davis-Kean, 2005; Dearing, McCartney, and Taylor, 2002; Duncan, Brooks-
Gunn, & Klebanov, 1994; Haveman & Wolfe, 1995; Nagin and Tremblay, 2001; Smith,
Brooks-Gunn, & Klebanov, 1997). The greater part of research on the routes in which
parental instruction shapes kid results has been directed through cross-sectional
correlational examinations or here and now longitudinal plans in which guardians and
kids are followed through the youngster's pre-adult years.

So why is it important to understand parents’ perception of preschool environment and
developing concept of possible relationship with parents’ level of education? Rudduck,
Day and Wallace (1997) argue that to improve school life, it is vital that choices of
preschool among parents be scrutinized to establish whether there exists profiling in
terms of these choices.

Bin Dahari and bin Ya (2011) investigated factors that influence the choice of preschool
education in Malaysia through an exploratory study that was conducted in Kuala Lumpur.
The study objective was to identify the most important factors and what influenced them
in relation to the choice of pre-school institution itself. The researchers collected data
from a sample of 162 participants who constituted parents with preschool children. Data was collected through questionnaires that were standardized to be understood by parents. After data analyses, the study revealed several factors that determined the choice of preschools by parents, whereby the level of parent’s education was one of the major determinants. Parents with higher level of education often chose schools with adequate resources, safe and secure locations, and qualified staff. This was also observed in the study by Tharenjah and Razlin (2017), who explained that parents with higher levels of education attainment always chose better performing preschools, especially private schools with better resources. However, the study used only parents as the only respondents. Use of other educational stakeholders could improve the scope of the responses.

Further, an investigation into the role of parents in early childhood education by Fagbeminiyi (2011) focused on a case of Ikeja, Lagos State, Nigeria. In this study, the objective was to identify the role of parents and understand the factors that influenced these roles. The study used a sample of 50 parents within the region and had children in preschools. Data was collected through the use of questionnaires. According to the findings of this study, parents had the role of ensuring their children enrolled in preschools with safe and secure environment for learning. However, this was determined by their ability of the parents to understand such aspects of education as safety and quality depending on their level of education attainment. Similar findings were also observed in the study by McEvoy (2014), which explained that the level of parental education was one of the leading factors that determined the choice of preschool a parent
made for their children. However, the study used parents as the only respondents, hence limiting the scope of responses.

Locally, Ngeno (2012) investigated the influence of parental characteristics on enrolment of preschool children in Kuresoi Division, Nakuru County. The study employed cross-sectional design, targeting parents with children who should be in preschool, head teachers and the area chief of Kuresoi Division in Kuresoi District. The researcher used snowball sampling to identify potential respondents in the study. The sample size comprised 100 parents with children who should have joined preschool. Data was collected through questionnaires for the parents and interview schedules for head teachers and the area chief. After data analysis, the study revealed that parental level of education determined the choice of preschools they made for their children. This was echoed by Kimu (2012), who explained that parental involvement in a child’s education was influenced by several factors, with parental level of education among them. However, the study was conducted in a relatively remote area; hence its findings cannot be generalized for urban regions. This is because the region is unique in relation to socio-cultural factors that affect perceptions of parents and perceived quality aspects for pre-school environment; hence the study findings cannot be generalized even for several other rural regions. This was addressed in our study by focusing on a well-integrated urban population, hence making it possible to generalize the study findings especially for urban settings.
2.6 Parents’ Income and Perception of the Quality of School Environment in Pre-primary Schools

Salary is the steady fiscal asset earned by a person. It is demonstrated that kids raised in less ideal conditions get less training; notwithstanding that the enormous budgetary comes back to tutoring which is not the same case as the wealthy kids (Heckman and Masterov (2005). Krueger (2004) explored different commitments supporting the view that financial requirements altogether affect on parental impression of the preschool condition. However, Carneiro and Heckman (2004) propose that present parental pay does not clarify child instructive decisions, but rather that family settled impacts that add to changeless pay, for example, parental training levels, play a significantly more positive role. This is the focal conclusion of Cameron and Heckman (1998), utilizing US information, and Chevalier and Lanot (2002), adopting the UK National Child Development Study data.

To date, analysts have endeavored to distinguish the exogenous impact of salary on impression of nature of the preschool condition. The writing on assessing the causal effect of the parental wage on the child's educational achievement has depended on three recognizable proof methodologies: instrumental variables, embraced kids, and twins.

Examining some conceivable components for understanding selection of preschools Dixon et al. (2013) affirm the causal impact of parental salary on nature of preschool condition recognition and gauge that by age sixteen, the offspring of guardians influenced.
While investigating the impact of parental income and education and schooling of their children, Chevaleri, Harmon, Sullivan, and Walker (2013) used UK Labor Force data to understand aspects of schooling and income. According to this study, parents` perception of school environment for preschools varied significantly depending on the level of a parent’s income, where parents with higher levels of income considered preschools with more qualified teachers, better resources, and located in safer regions as the ones with quality preschool environment. This was also supported by Kingdon (2005), who explained that parents with higher income associated quality preschool environment with private preschools where they paid heft fees for their children. However, the study by Chevaleri, Harmon, Sullivan, and Walker (2013) had a number of limitations. For instance, the study used secondary data, which affected its ability to address the current situation. The application of old secondary data limited the ability of the study findings to address current problems when implemented. Further, the study was not specific in scope; hence adoption of its recommendations would be limited. However, this was addressed in our study; here primary and current data was collected from respondents, while the study was conducted in a precisely described target population.

In another study, Ejuju (2011) investigated determinants of public investment in early childhood development within the education sector at national and local levels in Uganda. The study used Ex Post Facto research design. The study was carried out in 40 out of 77 districts in Uganda that were stratified and later randomly selected. A total of 90 respondents including 10 ECD policy makers, 40 Education Officers, and 40 ECD focal persons were purposively sampled. Data were collected through questionnaires and
analyzed. After data analysis, the study revealed that several factors interacted to predict the manner in which parents invested in their children in relation to childhood education. For instance, the level of income predicted the type of school environment a parent considered for his/her child since they believed better environment were characterized by availability of all necessary resources, which was observed especially in private schools. This was observed by Achieng (2016), who observed that parents with higher levels of income often took their children to the expensive preschools, which they perceived to offer quality environment for their children. However, the study covered a larger region but used a small sample which might have affected its representativeness. This was however addressed by use of an adequate and representative sample.

In another study, Wakiuru (2016) investigated the influence of parents’ socio-economic status on their participation in children’s pre-school education in Kayole, Nairobi County, Kenya. A simple random sampling procedure was used to get 35 pre-school teachers and 120 parents. Questionnaires for preschool teachers and interview schedules for parents were data used as collection instruments. Results show that parental level of education and income had positive association with their level of participation in pre-schools, where the level of income determined the type and quality of pre-school environment parents presented their children. This was also observed in another study conducted by Melly and Mwangi (2018), which indicated that the level of parental income significantly affected the manner in which parents perceived the quality of school environment for pre-school children. However, the study used a relatively small sample, which might have affected accuracy of the findings. Further, the study was conducted in an area with unique characteristics; hence generalization of the findings would be impossible. However, this
study embraced a relatively large sample size; hence the study population was adequately represented.

### 2.7 Summary of Literature Reviewed

The literature reviewed in this study has provided a good background upon which this study is grounded. The literature has shown that many studies have been done on parents and preschool children. Many of these studies have focused on performance and participation of preschool children. The literature has further revealed that most parents regardless of their occupation, education level or income worry about performance of their children. However, the researcher has really found it hard to get any literature that connects parental perceptions and quality of preschool environment. In fact, studies that were mentioning perceptions were on different contexts while those mentioning parental education and income were quit general. This study theretofore finds a big gap that may end up solving some pertinent problems and scenarios observed in our society today. The increasing disparity from different facets of life poses many questions than answers. In this study, important answers were explored with the view of understanding some parental characteristics such as occupation, income and education level, where the researcher tried to link them to perception on quality of preschool environment.
CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter contains research design, location of the study, target population, sampling techniques and sample size, research instruments, pilot study, data collection procedure, data analysis and logistical and ethical considerations.

3.2 Research Design

The study adopted a comparative study design. According to Sifuna (2009), comparative research designs are applicable when the researcher is interested in comparing different aspects. In this study, the researcher was interested in comparing preschool environment perceptions of different parents based on their occupations. The study tried to establish whether parents of different occupations perceived preschool environment differently. The study further explored whether these perceptions determined the kind of preschools parents took their children. Comparative research design applies well in Embakasi Sub-county, where people with different occupations live and preschool with different environmental states are found.

3.2.1 Variables

a) The independent variables included occupations of parents of preschool children, level of education and level of income of preschool school environment. Occupations were measured by whether parents were in formal employment (permanent and pensionable as well as contractual), business or jua kali sector. Level of education was measured on whether parents did not have any formal
education at all, primary, secondary or tertiary levels of education. Income was categorized as low (>20,000), medium (ksh 20,000-40,000) or high-income earners (>ksh 40,000).

b) The dependent variable was parents’ perception on quality of school environment in pre-primary schools. Perception was measured by their opinions on safety, availability of materials, and space in the preschools. For instance, whether their decisions are swayed by fenced/non-fenced preschools, those with well-kept classrooms or not.

3.3 Study Locale

The study was conducted in Embakasi Sub-county. The sub-county comprises Eastern and Southern suburbs of Nairobi. It is the most populated sub-county according to County Government of Nairobi (2017). In the same sub-county, there are slums and high-class estates. Similarly, there are preschools with different school environments. The indication is that there are various reasons as to why parents choose these schools despite the huge differences in costs. Therefore, it was important to assess their perceptions and how their socio-economic characteristics shape them. In this study, the researcher was seeking to explore whether parents of different socio-economic characteristics and educational level tend to select preschools based on perception of quality of school environment.
3.4 Target Population

The study targeted parents and caregivers of preschool children in Embakasi Sub-county. There were approximately 52 preschools in Embakasi Sub-county with an approximate of 25 children each. The study, therefore targeted 1300 parents. Parents were identified through their children from different preschools where data was collected.

3.5 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

3.5.1: Sampling Techniques

The study adopted two levels of sampling design; first, stratified sampling design was employed to sub-divide Embakasi into wards. Simple random sampling was then used to select preschools and participants. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), a sample size of 10% to 30% is adequate for a sample size. The study therefore used 30% to select preschools and 10% to select parents of these preschools. Caregivers were purposively selected based on the sampled preschools.

3.5.2 Sample Size

The sample size was distributed as displayed in table 3.1
Table 3.1 Distribution of sample size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target population</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preschools</td>
<td>52 16 (30%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>1300 130 (10%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The study was therefore conducted in 16 preschools, where 8 parents was sampled from each school. Sampling of parents was done through their children at school and then followed at their respective stations at the time of data collection.

3.6 Research Instruments

Questionnaires were the only research instrument used to collect data from parents. Questionnaires were selected because by using them the respondents could give more honest answers because all people responded to the same questions hence no room for biases. With questionnaire, a large sample can be made use of and thus the results can be more dependable and reliable since there is low cost even when the universe is large and is widely spread geographically (Kothari, 2011). The questionnaires had both open-ended where the respondents would respond as they wish and also close-ended where the respondents gave a specific answer. Each item was developed to address specific objectives or research question of the study. Data gathered by use of questionnaire included: level of education, occupation, economic level as well as their perceptions in regards to quality of preschool environment.
3.7 Pilot Study

A pilot study was carried out in two preschools (public and private) in Embakasi Sub-county. The schools were not included in the actual study to avoid influencing the findings due to prior knowledge encountered when same respondents are used twice for the same study. The choice of the two preschools was informed by the need to establish the differences in responses that may be caused by difference in type of school (private and public).

3.7.1 Validity

Validity is the accuracy and meaningfulness of the inference which are based on the research questions. Kothari (2011) elaborates that it is the degree to which the results obtained from analysis of the data actually represents the phenomenon under study accurately.

The validity of the research instruments was done through application of content validity whereby validity is determined by expert judgments. This was done by seeking the views of lecturers and colleagues. It was also done using the expert advice through discussions with my research supervisors. Validity was also ensured through use of pilot results to fine-tune the research instrument.

3.7.2 Reliability

According to Kothari (2011), the reliability is a measure of the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results of data after repeated trials. The reliability of the research instruments was established through a test-retest method. They were pretested
in two preschools in Embakasi East Sub-county, which was administered after two weeks.

3.8 Data Collection Techniques

The researcher sought permission from Kenyatta University School of Education and the Graduate School to conduct research. Permission was also sought from NACOSTI to enable the researcher to collect data from the field. Permission was also sought from the education officers of Embakasi East Sub-county. After obtaining the permit, informed consent was sought from the head teachers of the concerned schools to carry out research in their schools. The questionnaires were then distributed and the purpose of carrying out research was explained to the respondents. Any clarifications regarding the questionnaires were made to the respondents.

3.9 Data Analysis

After the data were collected, they were processed by editing to detect any error and omissions in the questionnaire. It was then coded and analyzed. Quantitative data were analyzed using Statistical tools such as SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Scientists) which presents the specific issues through coding and summarize the responses from all respondents. The qualitative data were analyzed through content analysis method. The findings were presented using bar graphs, pie-charts and frequency tables.

3.9.1 Null Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no difference in parents’ perception of the quality of school environment in pre-primary schools across various categories of parents’ occupation.
H₀₂: There is no difference in parents’ perception of the quality of school environment in pre-primary schools across various levels of parents’ education.

H₀₃: There is no difference in parents’ perception of the quality of school environment in pre-primary schools across various categories of parents’ income.

H₀₁ - H₀₃ were tested using ANOVA and results presented using tables and text

3.10 Logistical and Ethical Considerations

Preparation for the research was made through a reconnaissance visit to the study area in order to help the researcher make appropriate arrangements. The necessary travel arrangements were made and data collection materials prepared in advance. All respondents were made aware of the exact date and time of data collection.

The researcher obtained a permit to conduct research from Kenyatta University Graduate School of Education. Permission was also sought from the County’s education office to carry out research in Embakasi Sub-county. Informed consent from the principals of the sampled schools were then obtained and the purpose of the research explained to them. The respondents were assured confidentiality of the information they provide in the questionnaires.
CHAPTER FOUR
PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the researcher’s findings as pertaining to the data collected from the field. The chapter presents findings in line with the study objectives where both descriptive and inferential statistics are presented. Descriptive statistics have been analyzed using frequency distribution, percentages, means and standard deviation while the inferential statistics involved ANOVA. The research objectives were stated as follows:

- To establish parents’ perception of the quality of school environment in pre-primary schools in Embakasi East Sub-county in Nairobi County.
- To find out the influence of parents’ occupation on their perception of the quality of school environment in pre-primary schools in the sub-county.
- To identify the influence of parents’ level of education on their perception of the quality of school environment in pre-primary schools in the sub-county.
- To find out the influence of parents’ income on their perception of the quality of school environment in pre-primary schools in the sub-county.

4.2 Response Rate

The expected response rate for the study was 130 parents from Embakasi sub-county. However, 108 respondents returned the questionnaires making a response rate of 83.076%. The response rate was deemed to be sufficient for the study as Mugenda and
Mugenda (2003) who affirm that a response rate equal to or higher than 70% is adequate to authenticate the findings of a study.

4.3 Demographic Information of the Respondents

The demographic information considered for this study included: gender, education level, occupation and level of income. This information was considered important since it influences variables under study.

4.3.1 Respondents’ Gender

The respondents were asked to indicate their gender and their responses are as presented in figure 4.1 below.

Fig 4.1 Gender
As presented in the pie chart in figure 4.1 above, majority of the respondents, (65.7%) were male while the remaining 34.3% were female. This implies that the majority of the parents interviewed were male.

4.2.2 Respondents Level of Education.

The parents were also asked to indicate their highest level of formal education and their responses are as presented in table 4.1 below.

*Table 4.1: Level of Education*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Education</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Formal Education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>45.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>44.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>108</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in table 4.1 above, majority of the parents had either secondary education (45.4%) or diploma education (44.4%) as compared to those with degrees who only made up 5.6% of the total respondents. Additionally, parents with no formal education made up a minor 0.9% of the respondents while those with primary education made up 3.7% of the respondents. The finding implies that majority of the parents have some formal education but only 5.6% were able to go up to the university to get their degrees. This further
provides for the assumption that most of the parents did not pursue tertiary education as almost half of the respondents have only O-levels as their highest formal education.

### 4.2.3 Level of Income

The researcher further sought to know the respondent’s level of income and the table 4.2 below presents their levels of incomes as per their responses.

**Table 4.2: Income Level**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Level</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Below 10,000</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>57.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,000-20,000</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20,000-30,000</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30,000-40,000</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40,000-50,000</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 50,000</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>108</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As indicated in table 4.2 above, majority of the parent (57.4%) earn an income of less than 10,000 while those who earn between 10,000 to 20,000 made up 19.4% of the total respondents. Those earning between 20,000- 30,000 made up only 12.0% while those earning between 30,000-40,000 and 40,000-50,000 made up 5.6% and 1.9% respectively while the remaining 3.7% earn more than 50,000. This implies that majority of the parents in Embakasi sub-county earn less than ten thousands shillings every month with only a minority of its population earning over 50,000 shillings.
4.3 Parents’ Perception of the Quality of School Environment in Pre-Primary Schools

The first objective of this study was to determine the perception of parents towards the quality of school environment in pre-primary schools. The researcher used questionnaires to collect information from parents which helped determine their perceptions. The respondents were expected to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the study opinions as displayed in the table 4.3 below. The opinions were presented in a Likert scale where (1-strongly agree, 2-agree, 3-disagree, 4-strongly disagree)
Table 4.3: Parents’ Perception on Quality of Pre-primary School Environment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>SA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School environment is clean and in good condition</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School building</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child feels safe at school.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children are well-behaved.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child is safe going to and from school</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning environment is excellent</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proud that my child attends the school.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied with the extracurricular activities at the child’s school</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers assign high-quality homework</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers set high standards for learners</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied with my child’s school</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers are excellent.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learners respect their teachers</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wish that that child went to different school.</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>44.4%</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers have built strong relationships with my child.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child has friends at school he/she can trust and talk to about problems.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knows what is going on in my child's school.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents are involved in making important school decisions.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feels welcome at my child’s school.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knows what teacher expects of his/her child.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Majority of the parents agreed that the school environment is clean and is in good condition (agree 46.3% and strongly agree 39.8%). On the other hand, 2.8% and 1.9% strongly disagreed and disagreed that the school environment needs to be clean and in good condition for them to perceive the school as a high-quality facility. On the other hand, majority of the parents also agreed that school buildings determine their perceptions of the quality of the pre-primary school environment (agree 46.3% and strongly agreed 33.3%) with the remaining 1.9% and 7.4% disagreeing that school buildings do not determine the quality of pre-primary schools’ environment. The remaining 17.6% did not seem to care about school buildings and how they might shape their perception of pre-primary school environment. Additionally, majority of the parents perceived the safety of their children while at school as a key determinant of the quality of the pre-primary school environment with 46.4% and 33.3% strongly agreeing and agreeing that it shapes their perception respectively. However, 14.8% had no opinion on the safety of children while 0.9% and 4.6% strongly disagreed and disagreed with the influence of safety on their perception of the quality of pre-primary school environment. Majority of the parents also agreed that behavior is a key determinant in the quality of pre-primary school environment with 55.6% and 29.5% strongly agreeing and agreeing respectively that well-behaved children determined their perception of the quality of pre-primary school environment as opposed to 3.7% who disagreed.

Furthermore, the majority of the parents are proud that their children attend the schools where 50.9% strongly agreed that they were proud with 33.3% agreeing that they were proud and only a negligible 3.7% disagreeing that they were proud their children went to the school. The quality of homework was also found to be a great determinant shaping
the perception of parents regarding the pre-primary school environment. Majority of the parents agreed and strongly agreed (50% and 31.5% respectively) that teachers assign high quality homework. However, 3.7% and 1.9% strongly disagreed and disagreed that the quality of homework determines the quality of pre-primary school environment while the remaining 13% did not have an opinion regarding the quality of homework and the quality of pre-primary school environment.

The table also shows that majority of the parents seem to be satisfied with their children’s pre-primary school environment as they do not wish their children went to different schools. This can be seen in their responses when asked whether they wished their children went to different schools with the majority strongly disagreeing (44.4%) and 22.2% disagreeing with the statement. Only 13% and 10.2% agreed with the statement stating that they wished their children went to different schools. Involving parents in school decision making process and keeping them informed on the school activities was also found to be a key determinant on their perception of the quality of the school environment with 50.9% strongly agreeing and 38.0% agreeing that being involved in decision making and being informed of what’s happening in the school is important to them respectively. Parents also perceive how they are welcomed in their children’s schools as a determinant of the quality of the school environment with 46.3% and 42.6% agreeing and strongly agreeing that it shapes their perception. Only 2.8% disagreed with this statement. In addition, majority of the parents also agreed that knowing what the teacher expects from his or her child is a good indicator of the pre-primary school environment where 36.1% strongly agreed, 45.4% agreed and 2.8% disagreed.
As discussed above, majority of the parent’s opinions were skewed towards strongly agree and agree implying that various factors presented affect the parents perception on the quality of pre-primary school environment. These factors include the safety of the children both at school and while going and coming back from school; the relationship teachers build with the pupils; the buildings; extra-curricular activities; quality of homework; parents involvement in the school processes among others. These findings are concurrent with Epstein and Dauber (2010) whose major findings showed that some parents are sensitive on school environments attended by their children more so in regards to what the parents perceive as important to them and for their children’s education.

Moreover, these findings were in line with many other past studies, which also indicated that various factors affected parents’ perception on the quality of pre-primary school environment. For instance, Zhou and Li (2017) explained that parents in Chinese kindergartens perceived quality of pre-school environment was an important factor to consider as it had a relationship with the quality of education that a learner received. Further, Daniels, Forinder, and Clarke (2016) indicated that quality of pre-school environment impacted differently on the performance of learners; hence it was essential to improve quality of environment in pre-schools in terms of safety and security. The findings also reflected those of Libent (2015), which explained that the quality of education in preschools was majorly dependent on the quality of learning environment, which depended in the physical environment, interactions, and resources.
4.4 Parents’ Occupation and Perception of the Quality of School Environment in Pre-Primary Schools

The second objective of this study was to determine the influence to parent’s occupation and perception of the quality of pre-primary schools environments. The mean scores of the parent’s perceptions on quality of pre-primary school environment by the type of occupation are presented in table 4.4 below.

Table 4. 4: Mean Scores of Parents’ Perception on quality of pre-primary school environment by Type of occupation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of occupation</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval for Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Formal Employment</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>3.909</td>
<td>.49626</td>
<td>.06516</td>
<td>3.7704 - 4.0313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Person</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>3.943</td>
<td>.47605</td>
<td>.08550</td>
<td>3.7689 - 4.1182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juakali Sector</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.833</td>
<td>.31411</td>
<td>.12824</td>
<td>3.5037 - 4.1630</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casual employment</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.800</td>
<td>.45139</td>
<td>.15046</td>
<td>3.4530 - 4.1470</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.087</td>
<td>.59214</td>
<td>.29607</td>
<td>3.1453 - 5.0297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>3.908</td>
<td>.47676</td>
<td>.04588</td>
<td>3.8169 - 3.9988</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the results it can be observed that casual employment has the lowest mean (m=3.8000; SD= 0.45139) followed by the JuaKali sector with a mean and standard
deviation of 3.8333: SD 0.31411 respectively. On the other hand, others have the highest means of m=4.0875; sd= 0.59214 respectively. The formal employment’s mean is 3.9009 and its standard deviation is 0.49626. While the mean for business persons stands at 3.949435 with a standard deviation of 0.476. additionally, it can be observed that on the lower bound mean, others had a lower mean of 3.1453 and an upper bound mean of 5.0297 as compared to the business persons who had the highest lower bound mean of 3.7689 and an upper bound mean of 4.0313 which implies that the means on occupations and perception did not express large variation. Therefore, to establish whether there was a significant difference in these means, the researcher further conducted ANOVA as displayed in table 4.5.

Table 4.5: ANOVA occupation and perception

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>0.309</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.077</td>
<td>0.332</td>
<td>0.856</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>24.011</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>0.233</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>24.321</td>
<td>107</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The findings displayed in table 4.5 show that there was no significant difference. In the occupation and the perception of parents towards the quality of pre-primary school environment (p=0.865>0.05) at 95% confidence interval hence we do not reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is no difference in parents’ perception of the quality of school environment in pre-primary schools across various categories of parents’ occupation.
Therefore, the means in differences perceptions is likely due to chance and not occupation. The study findings are different from Hsu and Yuan-fang (2013) who found that the perception of parents on the quality of school environment differed across various occupations. Hsu and Yuan-fang (2013) in their study found a high positive correlation between labor-class parents’ perception being more oriented towards the curriculum design and non-intellectual developments as compared to white collar parents who prefer schools that recreates value the value of schools education by ensuring safety, creativeness and growth opportunities for their children.

In past studies, occupation reflected social economic status for different parents; hence, this affected their perception of quality of school environment in preprimary schools. For instance, Huisman, Rani, and Smits (2010) found out that parent with better overall socio-economic status considered factors such as available resources, location of the school, and availably of qualified teachers as predictors of quality pre-primary school environment. Further, Park (2014) explained that parents` socio-economic status determined their perception of the quality of pre-school environment, while Achieng (2015) found out that socioeconomic status guided the manner in which parents perceived that quality of education, where socio-economically stable parents preferred safe and secure preschools with adequate resources as the ones with quality environment.

4.5 Parents’ Level of Education and Perception of the Quality of School Environment in Pre-Primary Schools

The second objective of the study sought to establish whether the parents’ perceptions of the quality of pre-primary school environments are different across various levels of
parents’ education. The null hypothesis being tested for this objective is; H₀₂: There is no difference in parents’ perception of the quality of school environment in pre-primary schools across various levels of parents’ education. To test the null hypothesis, mean scores of the parents levels of education was conducted and the results are as displayed below.

**Table 4.6: Mean Scores of Parents’ Perception on Quality of Pre-primary School Environment by Level of Education**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Education</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval for Mean</th>
<th>Lower Bound</th>
<th>Upper Bound</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No formal education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.700</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>4.70</td>
<td>4.70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.837</td>
<td>0.80765</td>
<td>0.40382</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>4.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>3.935</td>
<td>0.45985</td>
<td>0.6569</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>4.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>3.879</td>
<td>0.43830</td>
<td>0.6326</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>4.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.825</td>
<td>0.69552</td>
<td>0.28395</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>4.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>3.908</td>
<td>0.47676</td>
<td>0.04588</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>4.80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As displayed in the table 4.6 above, degree holders have the lowest mean at 3.825 followed by those with primary education with a mean of 3.837. On the other hand, those with primary level education were found to have the lowest mean on the lower bound of 2.5524. The standard deviations were also observed to be high for the degree holders, which implies that the levels of education did not express large variations in regards to
differences in parents’ perceptions. Therefore, in order to establish whether there was a significant difference in the parent’s perceptions across the various education levels, an ANOVA test was performed as displayed in table 4.7 below.

Table 4.7: ANOVA for Level of Education and Perceptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>.766</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.192</td>
<td>.837</td>
<td>.504</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>23.555</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>.229</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>24.321</td>
<td>107</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As displayed in table 4.7 above, there is no significant difference in the occupation and the perception of parents towards the quality of pre-primary school environment (p=0.504>0.05) at 95% confidence interval hence we do not reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is no difference in parents’ perception of the quality of school environment in pre-primary schools across various levels of parent’s education. The study findings are different from those found by Ceglowski & Bacigalupa (2002) whose findings revealed that the parental education level determines many aspects in preschool life. The researcher explains that parents whose education level is advanced tend to be more conscious in regard to where they take their children to school. However, this study finds that there is no significant difference
between parent’s perception of quality pre-primary school environment and the different level of education attainment by the parents.

The findings of this study were in line with previous studies. For instance, Bin Dahari and bin Ya (2011) found out that several factors determined the choice of preschools by parents, whereby the level of parent’s education was one of the major determinants. Parents with higher level of education often chose schools with adequate resources, safe and secure locations, and qualified staff. A similar observation was made by Fagbeminiyi (2011), whose study explained that parents had the role of ensuring that their children enrolled in preschools with safe and secure environment for learning. However, this was determined by their ability of the parents to understand such aspects of education as safety and quality depending on their level of education attainment. This was also supported by Ngeno (2012), whose study explained that that parental involvement in a child’s education was influenced by several factors, with parental level of education being one of the highest determinant.

4.6 Parents’ Income and Perception of the Quality of School Environment in Pre-Primary Schools

The third null hypothesis in this study purported that there is no difference in parents’ perception of the quality of school environment in pre-primary schools across various categories of parents’ income. To test this hypothesis, the researcher conducted a means score test as well as an ANOVA test to determine whether parent’s income influence their perception of the quality of school environment. The results are as displayed below.
Table 4.8: Means Scores of Parents’ Perception on Quality of Pre-primary School Environment by Level of Income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Level</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval for Mean</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>below 10,000</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>3.8742</td>
<td>0.49694</td>
<td>0.06311</td>
<td>3.7480 - 4.0004</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>4.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,000-20,000</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4.0143</td>
<td>0.42401</td>
<td>0.09253</td>
<td>3.8213 - 4.2073</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>4.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20,000-30,000</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3.7423</td>
<td>0.35169</td>
<td>0.09754</td>
<td>3.5298 - 3.9548</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>4.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30,000-40,000</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.1500</td>
<td>0.16125</td>
<td>0.06583</td>
<td>3.9808 - 4.3192</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>4.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40,000-50,000</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.3000</td>
<td>0.14142</td>
<td>0.10000</td>
<td>3.0294 - 5.5706</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>4.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 50,000</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.8500</td>
<td>0.94692</td>
<td>0.47346</td>
<td>2.3432 - 5.3568</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>4.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>3.9079</td>
<td>0.47676</td>
<td>0.04588</td>
<td>3.8169 - 3.9988</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>4.80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the table 4.7 above displays, parents earning between 40,000 and 50,000 had the highest mean of 4.30 followed by those earning between 10,000 and 20,000 with a mean of 4.01. Those earning between 20,000-30,000 followed by those earning more than 50,000 had the least mean at 3.85. However, in the lower bound means, those with the least mean were those earning more than 50,000 at 2.343 followed by those earning 40,000-50,000. Additionally, the standard deviations were high for those earning more than 50,000 at 0.94692 as compared to SD= 0.14142 for those earning between 40,000-50,000. To determine whether this difference is significant, an ANOVA test was carried out and the findings are displayed in the table 4.9 below.
Table 4.9 ANOVA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>1.337</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.267</td>
<td>1.187</td>
<td>.321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>22.984</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>.225</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>24.321</td>
<td>107</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The null hypothesis stated that there is no difference between parents’ perception of the quality of school environment in pre-primary schools across various categories of parents’ income. According to the findings in the table 4.9 above, the null hypothesis will not be rejected as there is no statistical difference between the parent’s income and their perception on the quality of pre-primary school environment. (p=0.504>0.05) at 95% confidence interval. It can therefore be concluded that the differences in means are by chance and not as a result of the parent’s income levels. The study findings contradict with the findings by, Carneiro and Heckman (2004) who propose that present parental pay does not clarify child educative and instructive decisions, but rather that family settled impacts that add to changeless pay, for example, parental training levels, have a significantly more positive role. The researchers conclude in their research that financial requirements and the availability of disposable income affect parental perception of preschool environment.
These was unlike in other past studies which had a different view in relation to the level of income whereby they perceived that level of income impacted on perception of quality of school environment for pre-primary schools. For instance, Chevaleri, Harmon, Sullivan, and Walker (2013) explained that parents` perception of school environment for preschools varied significantly depending on the level of a parent’s income, where parents with higher levels of income considered preschools with more qualified teachers, better resources, and located in safer regions as the ones with quality preschool environment. Ejuu (2011) also mentioned that the level of income predicted the type of school environment a parent considered for his/her child since they believed better environment were characterized by availability and affordability of all necessary resources, which was observed especially in private schools. Further, Wakiuru (2016) explained that that parental level of education and income had positive association with their level of participation in pre-schools, where the level of income determined the type and quality of pre-school environment parents chose for their children.
CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher presents the summary, conclusions and recommendations. The chapter has been guided by the findings presented in chapter four, and has a thematic presentation of the research hypothesis.

5.2 Summary

The study obtained information from 108 parents from Embakasi sub-county who hail from different socio-economic backgrounds. The participants were issued with questionnaires to aid in identify their perceptions and factors that influence their perception on the quality of pre-primary school environment. The main purpose of the study was to determine the perceptions of parents on the quality of pre-primary school environment as well as whether socio-economic status of parents influences these perceptions. From the findings of this study, it has been established that the perception of parents towards the quality of pre-primary school environment are not influenced by socio-economic status.

Parents had varied perceptions towards the quality of the pre-primary school environment as majority admitted that various factors influence their choice of school their children attend. From the study, it was evident that parents in most cases desire the best environment for their children as can be seen from their responses geared towards safe,
secure, quality instructional materials, an all-round curriculum, qualified and competent teachers as well as schools which upheld high discipline standards.

The mean results revealed that occupation affects the perceptions of parents on the quality of preprimary school environment. It was evident that different occupations perceived the quality of pre-school differently with those in casual employment not having any major perceptions regarding the quality of pre-school environment. However, this difference in perception was not statistically significant hence it was concluded that occupation does not influence the perception of parent in Embakasi sub-county in the quality of pre-primary school environment.

Education determines various aspects of individual and societal life, but in this study, it was found that as much as the means of the different levels of education differed, it did not significantly influence the parents’ perception towards the quality of pre-primary school education. It was evident that parents with primary school education had the lowest means regarding their perceptions towards pre-primary school environment while that with degree education has highly varied views on the quality of pre-primary school environment. However, it was concluded that despite these differences, the perceptions of parents are not influenced by the parent’s level of education, as results were not statistically significant.

Parents who participated in the study have different economic capabilities though the majorities were found to earn below ten thousands shillings every month. As such, it was observed that the perceptions on the quality of education was high among parents who earning more than forty thousand each month as compared to those earning less than ten
thousands shillings. This is to be expected as parents earning more income have more disposable income which gives them the leeway to be more selective of the schools they take their children. However, despite these findings which seem to indicate that parents earning more money have higher expectations on their perceived quality pre-school environment, the statistical analysis revealed that the differences in mean across the various groups were not statistically significant. Therefore, it was concluded that despite the observed difference in perception across different income groups, there is generally no difference in perception among parents earning different incomes.

5.3 Conclusion

Based on the fact that there was no significant influence of parents’ occupation on perception of quality of school environment in pre-primary school education across the various levels of parent’s occupation. The first null hypothesis ‘There is no difference in parents’ perception of the quality of school environment in pre-primary schools across various categories of parents’ occupation’ is not rejected and the study concludes that parents occupation does not influence perception of quality pre-primary school environment.

The second hypothesis stated that ‘There is no difference in parents’ perception of the quality of school environment in pre-primary schools across various levels of parents’ education. This hypothesis is hereby not rejected and the study concludes that the parent’s level of education has no significant role in shaping their perceptions of the quality of pre-primary school environment.
On the study’s third hypothesis stating ‘There is no difference in parents’ perception of the quality of school environment in pre-primary schools across various categories of parents’ income’ the hypothesis is thus not rejected. It is then concluded that different categories of parent’s income does not influence the perception of parents on the quality of pre-primary school environment.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher made policy, practice and further research recommendations.

5.4.1 School Management

The study recommends the management of the preschools to be keener on the kind of school environment they expose children to ensure that they receive quality education in a safe, secure and well equipped schools with teachers who impart not only knowledge but life skills.

5.4.2 Ministry of Education

There is a need for the Ministry of Education to develop sound mechanisms of ensuring quality pre-primary school environment across all schools especially, the public primary schools, where average Kenyan parents send their children. This includes equipping the environment with necessary equipment for preschoolers, ensuring that teachers are well-trained to impart knowledge as well as ensure that they provide the pupils with the best environment for mental, social and emotional development. This study further recommends that the ministry of education ensure that pre-primary school environment be made quality by ensuring that they provide all the necessary materials and equipment.
needed to engage the pupils mentally, socially and emotionally. This will help ensure quality education even for children whose parents earn less than 10,000 and do not have the means to take their children to private schools.

5.4.3 Parents

This study further recommends that parents develop a more sense of quality environment for their students. Irrespective of the occupation, parents need to be keener on the kind of environment they entrust their children’s future to.

The study also recommends that parents identify the role preprimary schools play in shaping their children’s future. This calls on parents to work together to ensure that they work together with their school management and teachers to provide the children with the best school environment possible. This is irrespective of the parent’s education level; rather, it is a call for all stakeholders to secure their children’s future by providing them with a quality pre-primary school environment.

5.5 Recommendation for Further Studies

Further studies should be done on the influence of quality pre-primary school environment on parent’s perceptions. The influence of parent’s occupation should be investigated to determine how it shapes their perceptions. The level of income and its influence on school of choice for children should be investigated. Different income categories need to be investigated to determine how it shapes the decisions and perceptions parents have on quality education for their children right from pre-primary school.
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE PARENTS

Section A: Background Information

1. Gender

Male ( ) Female ( )

2. Age category

Below 18 ( ) 18 - 25 ( ) 26 - 35 ( ) 37 - 45 ( ) above 45 ( )

3. What is your highest level of education?

No formal education ( ) Primary ( ) Secondary ( ) College ( )
university ( )

4. In the table below, chose your appropriate occupation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>(tick √)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Formal employment (permanent and pensionable as well as contract)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business person</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Jua kali sector</td>
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<tr>
<td>Casual employment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other (specify) ______________________________</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
5. If your choice above is formal employment, kindly specify your profession (e.g. teacher)

6. If you are a business person, kindly state the nature of your business (e.g. shop keeper)

7. If you are a casual employee, kindly state the nature of your work (e.g. cleaner)

8. What is the range of income per month in your current occupation in KSh?
   
   Below 10,000  (   )
   
   Between 10,000 and 20,000  (   )
   
   Between 20,000 and 30,000  (   )
   
   Between 30,000 and 40,000  (   )
   
   Between 40,000 and 50,000  (   )
   
   More than 50,000  (   )
**Section B: Perception on quality of school environment**

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>My child’s school environment is clean and in good condition</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>I like my child’s school building</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>My child feels safe at school.</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Learners at my child's school are well-behaved.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>My child is safe going to and from school</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>The learning environment at my child’s school is excellent</td>
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<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>I am proud that my child attends this school.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>I am satisfied with the extracurricular activities at my child’s school.</td>
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<td>9.</td>
<td>Teachers assign high-quality homework that helps my child learn.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Teachers at my child's school set high standards for learners</td>
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<td>11.</td>
<td>Overall, I am satisfied with my child’s school.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>The teachers at my child's school are excellent.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>My child's academic performance has improved because of the staff at this school</td>
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<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Learners at my child's school respect their teachers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>I wish my child went to a different school.</td>
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<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>The teachers in the school have built strong relationships with my child.</td>
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<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>My child has friends at school he or she can trust and talk to about problems.</td>
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<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>I know what is going on in my child's school.</td>
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<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Parents are involved in making important school decisions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>I feel welcome at my child’s school.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>I know what my child's teacher expects of my child.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX II: APPROVAL OF RESEARCH PROJECT PROPOSAL

KENYATTA UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL

E-mail: dean-graduate@ku.ac.ke
Website: www.ku.ac.ke

P.O. Box 43844, 00100
NAIROBI, KENYA
Tel. 810901 Ext. 4150

Internal Memo

FROM: Dean, Graduate School                         DATE: 17th May, 2018
TO: Dinah Omurwa
     C/o Early Childhood Studies Dept.

REF: E55/OL/CTY/26516/2015

SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF RESEARCH PROJECT PROPOSAL

This is to inform you that Graduate School Board at its meeting of 9th May, 2018 approved your Research Project Proposal for the M.Ed Degree Entitled, “Influence of Parents’ Socio Economic Status on Perception of Quality School Environment in Pre-Primary Schools Nairobi City County, Kenya”.

You may now proceed with your Data Collection, Subject to Clearance with Director General, National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation.

As you embark on your data collection, please note that you will be required to submit to Graduate School completed Supervision Tracking Forms per semester. The form has been developed to replace the Progress Report Forms. The Supervision Tracking Forms are available at the University’s Website under Graduate School webpage downloads.

Thank you.

HARRIET ISABOKE
FOR: DEAN, GRADUATE SCHOOL

c.c. Chairman, Early Childhood Studies Department.

Supervisors:
1. Dr. Nyakwara Begi
   C/o Department of Early Childhood Studies
   Kenyatta University
APPENDIX III: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

KENYATTA UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL

E-mail: dean-graduate@ku.ac.ke
Website: www.ku.ac.ke

P.O. Box 43844, 00100
NAIROBI, KENYA
Tel. 8710901 Ext. 57530

Our Ref: E55/OL/CTY/26516/2015

DATE: 17th April, 2018

Director General,
National Commission for Science, Technology
and Innovation
P.O. Box 30623-00100
NAIROBI

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION FOR DINAH OMURWA – REG. NO. E55/OL/CTY/26516/2015

I write to introduce Dinah Omurwa who is a Postgraduate Student of this University. The student is registered for M.Ed degree programme in the Department of Early Childhood Studies.

Dinah Omurwa intends to conduct research for a M.Ed Project Proposal entitled, “Influence of Parents’ Socio Economic Status on Perception of Quality School Environment in Pre-Primary Schools Nairobi City County, Kenya”.

Any assistance given will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully,

MRS. LUCY N. MBAABU
FOR: DEAN, GRADUATE SCHOOL
APPENDIX IV: DATA COLLECTION PERMIT FROM NACOSTI

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

Telephone: +254-20-2231371, 2241349, 3310571, 2219420
Fax: +254-20-318245, 3118249
Email: info@nacosti.or.ke
Website: www.nacosti.or.ke
When replying please quote:

Ref No. NACOSTI/P/18/46238/22987

Date: 25th June, 2018

Dinah Bonareri Omurwa
Kenyatta University
P.O. Box 43844-00100
NAIROBI

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to carry out research on “Influence of parents’ socio economic status on perception of quality school environment in pre-primary schools Nairobi City County, Kenya” I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in Nairobi County for the period ending 22nd June, 2019.

You are advised to report to the County Commissioner and the County Director of Education, Nairobi County before embarking on the research project.

Kindly note that, as an applicant who has been licensed under the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 to conduct research in Kenya, you shall deposit a copy of the final research report to the Commission within one year of completion. The soft copy of the same should be submitted through the Online Research Information System.

DR. MOSES RUGUTT, PH.D
DIRECTOR General, CEO

Copy to:

The County Commissioner
Nairobi County.

The County Director of Education
Nairobi County.
APPENDIX V: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION FROM NACOSTI

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:
MS. DINAH BONAREI OMUURWA
of KENYATTA UNIVERSITY, 35286-100
Nairobi, has been permitted to conduct
research in Nairobi County

on the topic: INFLUENCE OF PARENTS’
SOCIO ECONOMIC STATUS ON
PERCEPTION OF QUALITY SCHOOL
ENVIRONMENT IN PRE-PRIMARY
SCHOOLS NAIROBI CITY COUNTY, KENYA

for the period ending:
22nd June, 2019

Signature

[Signature]

Director General

National Commission for Science,
Technology & Innovation

[Signature]
APPENDIX V  MAP OF NAIROBI CITY COUNTY