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Influence of Head Teachers' Human Resource Management Skills on Preschoolers' Access To Quality Education in Kisii County, Kenya

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Abstract:

The first five years of a child play a critical role in laying a solid foundation for primary, secondary and future learning of any student or pupil. Hence, the quality of Early Childhood Education which leads to the acquisition of basic competencies among preschoolers is crucial for a child's subsequent learning and Educational advancement. In spite of the great importance associated with the Early Childhood Development and Education in Kenya, the government's effort to ensure that all preschool age children access quality education has not been impressive. Hence, the present study sought to explore the influence of head teachers' human resource management skills on preschoolers' access to quality Education in Kisii County, Kenya. The study adopted ex post facto research design. The target population for the study included 702 Head teachers, 957 Pre-primary Teachers, 9 sub-county ECDE officers and 2 County ECDE officers. The sample size for the study included 155 Head teachers, 282 Pre-primary Teachers, 9 sub-county ECDE officers and 2 County ECDE officers. The data was collected using questionnaires and interview schedule. To ensure validity of research instruments in the present study, face, construct and content validities of the research instruments were assessed. The study employed the split-half method to establish the reliability of the instrument which was found as $r = 0.848$. The study collected both qualitative and quantitative data. Quantitatively collected data was analyzed using measures of central tendencies, frequency distributions, percentages, Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient, simple and multiple regression analysis while thematic analysis was used to analyse qualitative data. The study established that there was statistically significant positive correlation ($r = .593$, $n = 268$, $p < .05$) between the Head Teachers' human resource management skills and preschoolers' access to quality Education. In addition, there were statistically significant ($p < .05$) positive correlation between the Headteachers' management of human resources and all the five aspects of preschoolers' access to quality education investigated (resources adequacy in ECD, quality nutrition, health and safety in ECD, child acquisition of basic literacy competencies, participation in ECE (Absenteeism, Punctuality, and Retention)).

Keywords: Head teachers' human resource management skills, access to quality education, preschool education and preschoolers

1. Introduction

Globally, many countries recognize Early Childhood Development and Education as an important pillar for accelerating the attainment of Education for All (EFA) and the Sustainable Development Goals (UNESCO, 2014). To ensure quality Education and learning environment during a child's formative years, EFA's first goal stipulates that it is the responsibility of every Government to expand and enhance comprehensive Early Childhood Education. Also, according to a 2002 report by the World Fit for Children Conference, it is important for every child to have a good start to life whereby a child receive quality Education within a child friendly learning centres and management (Githinji & kanga, 2011).

In this regard, many developing and developed nations have been developing and implementing policies that are perceived to improve the state of Early Childhood Education in various countries (Kang'ethe, Wakahiu & Michael, 2015), this has galvanized many countries, especially in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), into confronting their historically low access to quality early childhood education (Murunga, 2015). This has brought a remarkable success in attracting many children into schools (UNESCO, 2014). However, filling the classrooms is not enough in the process of ensuring access to basic education and Education for all. The goal is geared towards having positive social and economic returns in which improving the quality of Education is the key emphasis. Unfortunately, the 2010 UNESCO report indicate that the quality and management of preschool education is not satisfactory in many countries and many preschool learning centres have poorly established learning environment in most sub-Saharan Africa counties, Kenya inclusive.

Management plays an important role in improving quality of education. It is argued that school management correlates with the provision of quality education which translates to learners' access to quality educations whereby children attends schools regularly and perform well in various tests (Olaleye, 2013). School management bodies are entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring that all learners get quality education by planning, mobilizing resources and managing resources on a day today basis (Policy Framework for Education and Training, 2012). In the school management in Kenya, primary school head teachers are charged with full responsibility of ensuring that there is quality education at the pre-primary school section (Ganira, Odundo & Muriithi, 2016).

In Kenya, the management of Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE) is under the primary school management board which is expected to expand access and enhance quality of ECDE services for children aged 4-5 years (Republic of Kenya, 2013). However, there have been many challenges in the implementation of preschool education in the country. To address the problems inherent in preschool Education in Kenya, the Constitution of Kenya (2010) establishes a system of governance where by Pre-School Education and administration becomes a devolved function of the county governments. However, with the devolution of ECE to county government, there are still challenges in the implementation of ECE. Currently there are disparities in the 47 counties on their priorities related to the Implementation of Early childhood Education whereby some counties have employed ECDE teachers while others have not (Odundo, 2013). This has resulted in diversity of practices by various county government and stakeholders compromising the quality of service and Education offered by ECDE centres (Wangila, 2017).

In Kisii County, due to low quality preschool Education which is associated to a lack of adequate skills related to reading and numeracy and some other children went to class one without necessarily going through preschool education, the percentage of class three pupils who could read and do class one numeracy levels sums were 68.7% while class three pupils who could read a Kiswahili paragraph were 59.2% and 61.4% in 2011 and 2012 respectively, the class pupils who could read a paragraph were 53.5% and 51.5% in 2011 and 2012 respectively and, lastly, class three who could do subtraction were 73.1% and 54.9% in 2011 and 2012 respectively (Uwezo, 2012). Still in Kisii County, class three pupils in the rural areas who could do class two work were 27.4%, while class three pupils who could do class two work in the urban areas were 29.2% and it was only 64.2% of pupils aged between 6 and 16 years who were able to do every day mathematics (Uwezo, 2016). These results have remained stagnant and have raised concern on the quality of pre-primary Education offered in Kisii County. Owing to the role played by primary school head teachers in the day to day activities within ECDE centres, the current study sought to investigate the influence of head teachers' management skills on preschoolers' access to quality Education in Kisii County, Kenya.

2. Literature Review

Adeyemi (2010) carried a study to establish the influence head teachers' managerial competencies on pupils' achievement in social studies in South west Nigeria. The study found that there was no statistical significance relationship between teacher's qualifications and students' performance. In another study, Bouchamma, Basque, and Marcotte (2014) carried out a study to explore the principals' beliefs, perceptions and self-efficacy on human resource competence at school in Canada. The study established that there was a positive relationship between the school managers' practices and institutional outputs.

Matzler (2014) conducted a study to explore the impact of teacher knowledge on student achievement in Munich. The study correlations revealed that there was a weak positive relationship between head teachers' supervisory role and students' achievement. This owes to the fact that when institutions are not keen on instructional provision and supervision, it provides avenues for low performance in examinations. Mohammed (2014) further carried a study on the impact of educational management in Ghana. The study findings indicated that improving educational quality was when the heads of the institutions provide assistance to their teachers by providing them with feedback, and good services.

Mulford (2016) did a research on the participative decision making on encouraging teacher responsibility in Ethiopia. The study established that participative decision making was motivational to participants as it encouraged teachers to assume a greater responsibility for what happened in a school, hence increasing teacher's ownership of change, giving teachers a voice in school policy and making better use of professional expertise. Studies by Gratton (2017) also indicated that human resource management is the heart of administrative and leadership in schools. Also, the study added that headteachers perceived management as the developers of strategic cause in which individuals are motivated to contribute to enhance their commitment and effort on academic performance. However, Jay (2014) did not establish whether there is a significant relationship between head teachers' managerial competence of human resources and academic achievement.

Maicibi (2013) opined that all institutions or organizations are made up of human and non-human resources. The study also asserts that when the quantity and human resources is brought together, it can manipulate other resource towards realizing institutional goals and objectives. Every institution should strive to attract and retain the best of human resource. Babatunde (2014) further established that management skills used by principals had a significant correlation with management effectiveness. This included supervising skill, organization skill and communicating skill. This researcher adopted correlation survey research design to conduct the study. Chemutai (2015) also carried out a study on the role of school principals as human resource managers in secondary schools in Nandi County, Kenya. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze data. The study findings showed that main roles of the secondary school principals as a human resource manager were related to the recruitment of staff, team work encouragement, staff empowerment and staff career development. The study further established that there was no significant influence of human resources on academic achievement. Kindiki (2009) also carried a study on the effectiveness of boards of governors in curriculum

implementation in secondary schools in Kenya. The study established that training of the secondary school board of management members was directly related to curriculum implementation.

Makuto (2014) conducted a study on the influence of headteachers' management practices on pupils' academic performance at Kenya certificate of primary education examination in Teso North District. Descriptive statistics in form of frequencies and percentage was used to analyze data. Results showed that head teachers' management practices affect academic performance of pupils at Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE). Ineffective human resource and financial management were positively linked to students' low academic performance and acquisition of low-quality education. Mohammed (2014) confirmed that educational management in Ghana helped in improving educational quality when the heads of the institutions provided assistance to their teachers by providing them with feedback, guidance as well as counselling services. Ugoani (2014) further acknowledged that there was a significant positive relationship between teachers' competencies and effective management of basic education in Nigeria.

3. Research Methodology

The study adopted ex post facto research design. This research design is useful when investigating cause-effect relationships between independent and dependent variables in situations which do not permit manipulation of variables. The research designs enabled the study to gather adequate information that provides a better understanding of a research problem and answering the entire research questions (Creswell & Plano Clark 2011). The study was conducted in Kisii County. Kisii County is the second smallest county in the former Nyanza Province with an area of 1,332.7 km². The County has 9 sub-counties, 24 divisions, 75 locations and 190 sub locations. The target population for the study consisted of 702 Head teacher, 957 Pre-primary Teachers, 9 Sub-county ECDE officers and 2 County ECDE officers. To obtain the required sample size, the study adopted simple random sampling, cluster and purposive sampling techniques. The sample size for the study included 155 Head teachers, 282 Pre-primary Teachers, 9 sub-county ECDE officers and 2 County ECDE officers. The data was collected using questionnaires; interview schedule and school Observation checklists. Quality measures and procedures of piloting, validity and reliability of the research instruments were undertaken prior to actual data collection. Cooper and Schindler (2010) indicated that a pilot test is conducted to detect weaknesses in design and instrumentation and to provide proxy data for selection of a probability sample. On the basis of the current study, the researcher piloted the instruments in 9 primary schools in the neighbouring Nyamira County where by nine head teachers, 9 pre-primary school teachers, one Sub- County ECDE Officer, and one ECDE County Director were used. To ensure validity of research instruments in the present study, face, construct and content validities of the questionnaires and interview schedules were assessed. The study also employed the split-half method to determine the reliability of the research instrument. Quantitative data was coded and entered into the computer for analysis using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22.0. To analyze quantitative data, descriptive and inferential statistics that were used included frequency counts, percentages, measures of central tendency, Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient, simple regression and multiple regression. All hypotheses testing was done at $\alpha=.05$. With the qualitative data, the researcher used thematic analysis. This involved coding the collected data into themes in relation to the research questions (Gerstenfeld and Berger, 2011). Then a list of all topics was made and sorted according to similarities and differences. The topics were later abbreviated as codes and the codes written near the related text in word document. Then these topics were turned into categories – major topics, unique topics, leftovers and emerging themes. Finally, the information was assembled according to research questions (Creswell, 2009).

4. Data Analysis Results and Conclusion

The researcher administrated Questionnaire Pre-Primary Teachers' Questionnaire. Out of 282 questionnaires administered, 268 of them were returned for data analysis which translates to 95.71% response rate. The study also anticipated to conduct interviews to 30 primary school head teachers, 9 sub-county ECEE officers and 2 county ECDE officers (directors). However, the researcher successfully conducted 73.3%, 77.78% and 100% of the interviews to Primary school head teachers, Sub-county ECDE officers and County ECDE officers (directors) respectively. In establishing the minimum response rate percentage, Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) observed that a 50% response rate is adequate, 60% good while the response rate of above 70% very good. Based on this assertion, the current study's overall response rate of 92.18% was considered quite satisfactory.

4.1. Relationship between Head Teachers' Human Resource Management Skills and Preschoolers' Access to Quality Education

To investigate whether there was any statistical relationship between the Head Teachers' human resource management skills and preschoolers' access to quality Education, the null hypothesis was tested: *There is no statistically significant relationship between the Head Teachers' human resource management skills and preschoolers' access to quality education.* To do this, a Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was computed; with overall scores from the five aspects of preschoolers' access to quality education (resources adequacy in ECD, quality nutrition, health and safety in ECD, child acquisition of basic literacy competencies, participation in ECE (Absenteeism, Punctuality, and Retention), and access to child friendly learning environments) put together as dependent variable and scores of the Head Teachers' human resource management skills, as the independent variable. Table 1 shows the correlation analysis results in SPSS output.

		Headteachers' Management of Human Resources	Preschool Children' Access to Quality Education
Headteachers' Management of Human Resources	Pearson Correlation	1	.593**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	268	268
Preschool Children' Access to Quality Education	Pearson Correlation	.593**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	268	268

Table 1: Correlation between Head Teachers' Human Resource Management Skills and Preschoolers' Access to Quality Education

** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The finding of the study shows that there was statistically significant positive correlation ($r=.593$, $n=268$, $p<.05$) between the Head Teachers' human resource management skills and preschoolers' access to quality Education. Given that the relationship was statistically significant, the hypothesis that, "there is no statistically significant relationship between the Head Teachers' human resource management skills and preschoolers' access to quality education" was rejected. It was therefore concluded that Head Teachers' human resource management skills significantly correlated to the overall preschoolers' access to quality Education. This finding is consistent with that of Mohammed (2014) who carried a study on the impact of educational management in Ghana. The study showed that improving educational quality is when the heads of the institutions provides assistance to their teachers by providing them with feedback, and good services. On the contrary, the present finding is not supported by Adeyemi (2010) who carried a study to establish the influence head teachers' managerial competencies on pupils' achievement in social studies in South west Nigeria. The study found that there is no statistical significance influence of teacher's qualifications in explaining changes in student performance.

Further, when asked on how head teachers' competencies in human resource management influence preschoolers' access to quality education, one of the sub-counties ECDE officers observed that:

As an education officer in this region, it goes without any argument that the head teacher is the school and the school is the head teacher, all the activity within the school are always initiated and supervised by the head teachers. In fact, head teachers with better human supervision and management competencies plan the ECDE programmes well; try new things and their teachers do their best to improve learning (SCECDEO, 1).

From the above assertion, there is evident of positive relationship between head teacher's management of human resources and preschoolers' access to quality education. This finding is supported by Maicibi (2013) who opined that all institutions or organizations are made up of human beings and other non human resources. The study also asserts that when all resources are brought together, the institutional goals and objectives are fully realised. Every institution should strive to attract and retain the best of human resource.

In addition, on the relationship between head teachers' human resource management and preschoolers' access to quality education, another Sub-county ECDE officer had this to observe:

The head teachers are playing a crucial role in the implementation of ECDE educational reform and development. In the school system, the head teacher as an administrator influences his or her teachers to achieve the goals and objectives of the school. The fundamental goal of the school is to enhance the teaching and learning process. Hence the school administrators should endeavour to influence the behaviours of the teachers and other workers so as to achieve the goals of the school. Thus, when head teachers are effective in the management of human resources in their schools, the school performance improves, the workers and teachers are motivated hence the learners receive the best from the given education system (SCECDEO, 4).

The above excerpts from the interviews show that there is a positive relationship between head teachers human resource management competencies and preschoolers access to quality education. In particular, it can be observed that when head teachers are effective in the management of human resources in their schools, the school performance improves, the workers and teachers are motivated hence the learners receive the best from the given education system. This finding is supported by Babatunde (2014) who established that the management skills used by principals had a significant correlation with management effectiveness and schools' general learning outcome and quality education.

The above finding was further supported by another education officer who had this to say:

Currently in our school setting, the head teachers usually act as instructional leader and they usually play key role in ensuring that there is effective and persistent communication of school mission to staff, parents, and students. (SCECDEO, 3).

The above extract gleaned from the interview excerpt shows the head teachers of primary schools have a key role as human resource managers by acting as instructional leader and ensuring that there is effective and persistent communication of school mission to staff, parents, and students. This finding is in line with that of Mulford (2016) who conducted a research on the participative decision making on encouraging teacher responsibility in Ethiopia. The study's finding indicated that the head teachers' participative decision-making encouraged teachers to assume a greater responsibility for what happened in a school, hence increasing teacher's ownership of change, giving teachers a voice in school policy and making better use of professional expertise. This was found to increase the quality of education given in a given institution.

4.2. Correlation between Head Teachers' Human Resource Management Skills and Various Aspects Preschoolers' Access to Quality Education

The study further sought to explore the relationship between Head Teachers' human resource management skills and various aspect of preschoolers' access to quality Education. To do this, a Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was computed and the findings are presented in Table 2.

		Headteachers' Management of Human Resources
Quality nutrition, health and safety in ECD	Pearson Correlation	.419**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	268
Child acquisition of literacy competencies	Pearson Correlation	.357**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	268
Resource adequacy in ECD	Pearson Correlation	.587**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	268
child participation in ECE	Pearson Correlation	.607**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	268
Child friendly learning environments	Pearson Correlation	.363**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	268

Table 2: Correlation between Head Teachers' Human Resource Management Skills and Various Aspects of Preschoolers' Access to Quality Education
 **. Correlation Is Significant at the 0.05 Level (2-Tailed)

The findings of the study confirm that there were statistically significant ($p < .05$) positive correlation between the Headteachers' management of human resources and all the five aspects of preschoolers' access to quality education investigated (resources adequacy in ECD, quality nutrition, health and safety in ECD, child acquisition of basic literacy competencies, participation in ECE (Absenteeism, Punctuality, and Retention). Table 2 further indicates that although a statistically significant relationship was established, the magnitude of correlation was different between various aspects of preschoolers' access to quality education and the headteachers' management of human resources. For example, child participation in ECE (absenteeism, punctuality, retention) had the highest correlation ($r = .607$), while preschool children's acquisition of basic literacy competencies had the least correlations ($r = .357$) to headteachers' management of human resources as one of the perceived headteacher management skills/competencies.

This finding is in line with that of Jay (2014) who employed descriptive research design with 190 respondents. Findings indicated that there was a positive relationship between secondary school principals' management styles and teachers' performance in Gambella Regional State, Ethiopia. However, the finding is not in line with that of Matzler (2014) who conducted a study on the impact of teacher knowledge on student achievement in Munich. The study correlations revealed that there was a weak positive relationship between head teacher supervisory role and students' achievement.

The findings are further supported by qualitative results that were generated from the interview with the one of the sub-counties ECDE officer who observed that:

In preschool centres where learners access quality education, the primary school head teachers usually ensure that there is a clearly articulated mission of the school through which the staff shares an understanding of and a commitment to the school's goals, priorities, assessment procedures, and accountability. When the head teacher creates good working environment, the staff members usually accept responsibility for the learners' learning of the essential curricular goals. This usually improves the quality education children receive in the given learning environment (SCECDEO, 07).

The declarations articulate the stance that primary school head teachers play a crucial role in ensuring that children receive quality education. This is usually done by head teachers who possess human resource competencies related to creating good working environment to all teachers and other stakeholders. Further, one primary school head teacher observed that:

The head teachers have a crucial role of ensuring that there is an orderly, purposeful, business-like atmosphere, which is free from the threat of physical harm. The school climate is not oppressive and is conducive to teaching and learning. This good teaching and learning environment are usually associated with better academic achievement and quality access to education.

The above response from the interviews with the primary school head teacher show that the headteachers have a crucial role of ensuring that all human resources in their institution work in an environment free from all threat and oppressive conditions. This good teaching and learning environment are usually associated with better academic achievement and quality access to education. The results of the analysis agreed with Marzano (2015) who posited that a successful head teacher creates school culture where all stakeholders are involved in achievement of school. The study

further established that there was a positive relationship between the management of human resource and students' academic achievements.

4.3. Regression of Head Teachers' Human Resource Management Skills and Preschoolers' Access to Quality Education

In order to estimate the level of influence of Head Teachers' human resource management skills on preschoolers' access to quality education, a coefficient of determination was computed using a regression analysis whose results were as shown in Table 3.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.593 ^a	.352	.350	29.459

Table 3: Regression Analysis of Head Teachers' Human Resource Management Skills and Preschoolers' Access to Quality Education

a. Predictors: (Constant), Headteachers' Management of Human Resources

The model shows that Head Teachers' human resource management skills alone accounted for 35.2% of the variation in the overall preschoolers' access to quality education, as signified by coefficient R² of .352. This finding is supported by Chemutai (2015) who did a study on the role of school principals as human resource managers in secondary schools in Nandi County, Kenya. The study showed that main roles of the secondary school principals as a human resource manager were to relate well with the staff, encourage team work, staff empowerment and staff career developments which are all related to human resource management competencies.

This finding is supported by one county ECDE officer who indicated that:

In school where learners receive quality education, the school administrators guided by school head teachers usually ensures that there is a climate of high expectations in which the staff believes and demonstrates that all learners can obtain mastery of the school's essential curriculum. The head teachers also believe that teaching staff have the capability to help all learners obtain that mastery (CECDEO, 1).

In addition, one head had this to say in support of the previous observation:

The head teachers' competencies in human resource management are very important in effective management of teaching and learning process. The competencies that are usually associated with better academic achievement and quality education includes the head teachers' ability to improve staff welfare, maintenance of proper communication among and between teaching and non teaching staff, ensuring that the teachers receive training and retraining in relation to changes in the teaching and learning process (HT, 011).

The above statements gleaned from the interview excerpt shows that primary school head teachers' human resource competence related to proper communication among and between teaching and non teaching staff and adequate supervision of teaching staff are positively associated with better academic performance of learners and generally quality of education received by learners. This finding concurs with that of Makuto (2014) who conducted a study on the influence of head teachers' management practices on pupils' academic performance at Kenya certificate of primary education examination in Teso North District. Results showed that head teachers' management practices affect academic performance of pupils at Kenya Certificate of Primary Education. The finding is further supported by Bouchamma, Basque, and Marcotte (2014) who investigated principals' beliefs, perceptions and self-efficacy on school management competencies in Canada. The study established that among other factors perceived in management of educational services were human resources, learning environment and administration.

In addition, linear regression was generated to estimate the actual influence of the Headteachers' management of human resources on overall preschoolers' access to quality Education, as shown in Table 4.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	61.844	6.575		9.406	.000
	Headteachers' Management of Human Resources	3.034	.252	.593	12.025	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Preschool Children' Access to Quality Education						

Table 4 Coefficient of the Relationship between Headteachers' Management of Human Resources and Overall Preschoolers' Access to Quality Education

Regression equation: $Y = 61.844 + 3.034X_1 + \varepsilon$

Where, Y is preschoolers' overall access to quality education and X₁ is the Head Teachers' human resource management skills.

It is evident from Table 4 that if the headteachers' human resource management skill was improved by one standard deviation, then perceived scores in the level of preschoolers' overall access to quality Education would improve by .593 standard deviation units. On the same note, if the headteachers' human resource management skills increase by one unit then the level of the overall preschoolers' access to quality Education would improve by 3.034 units; this is a

substantial effect from one independent variable. In addition, the P -value was 0.000 which is less than .05, confirms a statistically significant influence of the headteachers' human resource management skills on the overall preschoolers' access to quality Education. This finding concurs with that of Makuto (2014) who conducted a study on the influence of head teachers' management practices on pupils' academic performance at Kenya certificate of primary education examination in Teso North District. Results indicated that head teachers' ineffective human resource, financial management and inadequate teaching/learning resources affect negatively the pupils' academic performance. The finding is further in line with that of Ugoani (2014) who acknowledged that there was a significant positive relationship between head teachers' competencies and effective management of basic education in Nigeria.

This finding is consistent with the observation of the ECDE teacher who indicated that:

I believe it is the head teacher who can make the school work environment conducive for teachers through pertinent practices that include; promotion of staff unity, motivation of teacher to work, staff safety from external attacks and good teacher community relationship. For good work to be done in the school and child perform well, the motivation and mood of teachers is equally important. This is usually done through the head teachers' capacity and strategies of making prompt payment to PTA teachers, and ensuring a safe and healthy working environment (ECDET, 09).

The above observation is further supported by another ECDE teacher who observed that:

School performance greatly improves when the headteacher has good communication network in the school to enable the teachers to be constantly informed of the progress being made in the school. I believe that for ECDE pupils to receive quality education, the head teachers should fully encourage all stakeholders' participation and planning of ECDE programme and activities (ECDET, 10).

The above statements gleaned from the in-depth interview with ECDE teacher 9 and 10, there is evidence that that when the primary school head teachers are more competent in managing the human resource available to them, the quality of education in their institution respectively improves. In addition, the Sub-county ECDE officer indicated that:

As an education officer, I have come to understand that Human resource management is a basic function of management that determines the performance of staff in any organization. Like in the preschool setting, the effective understanding and discharge of the Head's responsibilities and accountability necessitates that the head teachers retain the confidence of the School Executive through leadership that is exercised in a fair, open and responsive manner. This usually entails the management and control of the teaching and non teaching staff that are responsible in the implementation of ECDE programme (SCECDEO, 05)

Another Sub-county ECDE officer also observed that:

Head teachers are the senior administrators at a school and are responsible for managing staff and supervising the government's policies implementation at school level. Head teachers motivate and lead their teaching staff, evaluate their performance and set goals and expectations. They provide vision and leadership for a school and are ultimately responsible for keeping the smooth running of a school. The presence of a good head teacher is key to the recruitment and retention of good teachers. Head teachers often provide training to their staff. In addition, they often serve as the spokesperson for their school to parents and the community at large. They also often have some oversight over curriculum choices. When head teachers discharge these duties effectively and promptly, I confidently tell you that their schools perform well and the school experiences few dropouts.

The above assertion further confirms the positive relationship between human resource management competencies and preschoolers' access to quality education in term of high retention of learners and better academic achievement. This finding is supported by Babatunde (2014) who concluded that management skills used by principals of Secondary Schools in Oyo State, Nigeria had a significant correlation with management effectiveness and quality of education in their institutions. This finding is further in line with that of Jay (2014) who reported that there was a positive relationship between secondary school principals' leadership styles and teachers' performance in Gambella Regional State, Ethiopia.

5. Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

The study established that more than 75% of the head teachers had human resource management competencies assessed in the present study. Further, it is evident that there was statistically significant positive correlation ($r=.593$, $n=268$, $p<.05$) between the Head Teachers' human resource management skills and preschoolers' access to quality Education. In addition, there were statistically significant ($p<.05$) positive correlation between the Headteachers' management of human resources and all the five aspects of preschoolers' access to quality education investigated (resources adequacy in ECD, quality nutrition, health and safety in ECD, child acquisition of basic literacy competencies, participation in ECE (Absenteeism, Punctuality, and Retention)). However, the magnitude of correlation was different between various aspects of preschoolers' access to quality education and the headteachers' management of human resources. For example, child participation in ECE (absenteeism, punctuality, retention) had the highest correlation ($r=.607$), while preschool children's acquisition of basic literacy competencies had the least correlations ($r=.357$) to headteachers' management of human resources as one of the perceived headteachers' management skills/competencies.

From the regression analysis, it was established that the Head Teachers' human resource management skills alone accounted for 35.2% of the variation in the overall preschoolers' access to quality education, as signified by coefficient R^2 of .352. It was also evident that if the headteachers' human resource management skill was improved by one standard deviation, then perceived scores in the level of preschoolers' overall access to quality Education would improve by .593 standard deviation units. On the same note, if the headteachers' human resource management skills were increased by one unit then the level of the overall preschoolers' access to quality Education would improve by 3.034 units.

Since head teachers management competencies in terms of human resource, financial, teaching/learning and classroom instruction management were found to have a positive and significant influence on preschoolers' access to quality education, the Ministry of Educational should consider the introduction of mandatory courses to equip head teachers with management skills which are perceived to improve their managerial skills.

The current study found a substantial low access to adequate resources and child friendly environment by preschool school children. Therefore, the study recommends that the government should ensure that preschool centres have adequate resources and should inspect regularly the ECDE centres to ensure that preschoolers learns in a child friendly environment.

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