

Influence of Children Safety on Delivery of Early Childhood Education, Mwatate Sub County, Taita Taveta County, Kenya

Albeta Muthoni Muchai*, John Teria Ng'asike

School of Education, Mount Kenya University
*Corresponding author: albetamuchai@gmail.com

Received January 02, 2021; Revised January 26, 2021; Accepted February 03, 2021

Abstract Early Childhood Education has not been effective in most parts of the world, especially Sub Saharan Africa, and Kenya in particular; as it focuses mostly on the academic part and less effort is put conclusively to ensure comprehensive development of the child. This study sought to establish the influence of children safety on delivery of early childhood education. The specific objective of this study was to determine the influence of children safety on delivery of early childhood education in Mwatate Sub County, of Taita Taveta County in Kenya. The target population of this study was 6,217 individuals from which a sample size of 361. This research established a significant relationship between children safety and delivery of early childhood education. The study found that children safety influenced delivery of early childhood education positively by a 0.167 factor. The study established that children safety increased early school attendance and contributed significantly to their performance in schools. Unsafe school facilities endangered pupils' life while in schools and lack of children safety makes some pupils to be late in school. The findings of this study would contribute greatly towards development of realistic value expectations for children. The researcher suggests more studies to be carried out in different counties to find out the validity and reliability of the study's findings.

Keywords: children safety, early childhood, education, delivery

Cite This Article: Albeta Muthoni Muchai, and John Teria Ng'asike, "Influence of Children Safety on Delivery of Early Childhood Education, Mwatate Sub County, Taita Taveta County, Kenya." *American Journal of Educational Research*, vol. 9, no. 2 (2021): 77-82. doi: 10.12691/education-9-2-4.

1. Background Information

Early childhood programmers encompass comprehensive approaches, policies and services which are offered to children from conception to eight years. The importance of early childhood education is to be able to give the child a foundation for his physiological, emotional, moral, spiritual, physical and cognitive development. Early childhood education is the foundation for future formal learning in primary school and later years of education.

Early childhood education plays a significant role in children's growth and development [1]. It provides a valuable support to young children. The early years of a child's life are very essential for his/her growth and wellbeing. Having a safe stimulating environment enables a child to play, sing, read, and talk freely. These are significant to the development of children in the society. Proper nutrition, exercise, sleep and care make a difference in a child's life. Children grow and learn best in a safe environment where they are protected from neglect and stress [2]. Young children thrive when they have secure, positive relationship with adults who are knowledgeable about how to support their learning. Early

childhood has profound consequences on a child's future and what a child experiences and is exposed to influences greatly to a child development and wellbeing [3].

Learning begins well before the child goes to any formal learning. This is congruent to the Education for All [4] goal number one that calls for all governments to make sure that early childhood education are given the attention it deserves to enable young children thrive and develop. The programmers are especially important in areas of health and nutrition, water and sanitation which if not addressed at this tender age of these young human beings, their optimal growth, development and education will be jeopardized. Good and well-coordinated early childhood education plans and strategies will enable children to have solid foundation for a sustainable future. Through creation and implementation of early childhood programs and policies that are effective by the society, children will have solid foundation for a sustainable future. Researchers have come up with solutions that can bring a lot of positive result due to the prolonged effects that face people in their late years [4].

In Brazil through the Pastoral da Crianca (Child pastorate) child mortality has gone lower among the communities by 60 percent. Programs have been put into place like training health care workers who work in a

voluntary basis on which most are women. Their duties include making sure that they check the health of children and educate families on the need of sharing and encouraging their young children for better development [5].

In Africa, the development of early childhood education and care is not fully recognized though there is participation of communities in development of schools. Until recently, several studies conducted in the sub-Saharan Africa indicated that many African communities still provide labor and financial support to their early childhood development and educational programmer services [6].

In Kenya, the government initiated Sessional paper No. 1 of 2005 to promote fairness, access and ensure all children of school going age acquire basic education by 2015. This came about on realization that many pre-school age children did not attend school as a result of many challenges among them malnourishment and infringement of their basic rights. Consequently government initiated the Kenya Education Sector Support Programmer (KESSP) to cover all the sectors of education including Early Childhood Education. Although there was only one Kenya education sector support program sponsor that mainly did put its effort in nursery very little support, trickled down to the ECDE centers. This meant that maintenance of the ECDE programs faced many challenges. This forms the background on which this study was based on.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Success of any plan within an organization hinges to a significant extend on the inputs by the key players or contributors towards the daily operations and under takings of service delivery. The inputs may include, financial support, skilled personnel, information dissemination about the importance of the programmer to the beneficiaries and the interplay between these key players. There must be a total commitment towards the success of organizational support at all levels [7].

The overall research problem addressed in this study was, despite the government of Kenya's efforts to develop and promote the health and development of her children, the ECDE programs which they initiate move at a very slow pace as many of the National Policies lacking resources for implementation. Taking an instance of the Kenyans Sessional paper No. 1 of 2005 entitled "Policy framework for educational research and training" whose main objective was to promote fairness and access of every child to education by 2015, many pre-school age children are still out of school. These children still suffer from malnutrition and majority are still unable to meet their basic needs. The Kenya Education Sector Support Programmer (KESSP) which was meant to cover all the sectors of education including Early Childhood Education continue to face challenges of implementation. Although there was only one Kenya education sector support program sponsor that mainly did put its effort in nursery very little support is able to trickle down to the ECDE centers. This meant that maintenance of the ECDE programs faced many challenges, among them children safety. All these and many other underlying issues affecting ECDE sector prompted the researcher to carry out an intensive investigation in Taita Taveta

County-Kenya to try to unveil influence of children safety on delivery of early childhood education in Mwatate Sub- County.

1.2. Research Objective

This study sought to determine influence of children safety on delivery of early childhood education in Mwatate Sub County, of Taita County in Kenya.

The research is guided by the question on; what is the influence of children safety on delivery of early childhood in Mwatate Sub County?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Theoretical Framework

This study was based on basic needs theory. This theory was introduced by Abrahams Maslow, in 1943. Being the first theory of behavior motivation, [8] came up with a grading system of the needs of human. The theory states that human basic needs are five; namely love self-actualization safety psychological and esteem. After these needs are met to fully satisfaction, other secondary needs come up as motivators of behavior. The most important need takes control over the human and influences the human behavior. The needs are not singular; one need may dominate the behavior while the other need continues to influence the person. They include food, shelter, health and clothing. This means that optimal development of local community will be fostered by a high frequency of engagement, positive emotional climate, an optimal level of needs gratification, and an availability of all community services to cater for their health, growth, development and education.

The application of this theory is limited by the existence of limited resources against unlimited human wants. This theory is of importance to this research because all human beings have basic needs that must be attained. The community has role to play as it provides major supports like safety, school uniform, shoes, taking part building classrooms where pupils can take their studies from and many other things that are deemed necessary for the school to run smoothly. This theory is important in explaining how safety influences growth of early childhood in Kenya.

2.2. Children Safety and Early Childhood Education

Duszka [9] conducted a research on the effect of studying the effects of institution safety on institution capabilities. This research was guided by the following independent variables; School Climate Survey, Attendance, Movement, Mobility, and Suspensions. So as to come up with a test size of 359 respondents a random sample was used. This research used facts collected from The Florida's School Public Accountability Report. Descriptive methods were applied in analyzing collected data. Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) combined score is the one the measured school capabilities. The research produced results that showed that in primary

school, schools mean when increased by 1% can lead to an increase in school's FCAT score 18 % in school and safety score. Also, the study noted that there is no relationship between middle schools or high schools and Early childhood Centers.

A study on Safety Culture on nursery education capabilities, aided by this hypothesis: one can note that there is a remarkable co relation between safety performance and safety culture on the same there is also a remarkable co relation between job satisfaction and safety culture. Job satisfaction functions as an intermediary in between the co relation of safety performance and safety culture. The study found out that employee accidents are mostly caused by unsafe worker practices [10]. Further, the study noted that safety performance and safety culture have a remarkable co-relation job satisfaction. Also the study found that there is a significant role played by human factor in the avoidance of professional accidents. The study concluded that bosses and managers should spread and come up with safety culture in their businesses.

A study on a parents point of view the impacts that violence has on classroom behavior and educational found out that there was a poor correlation between educational progress, proper classroom behavior and fights between students [11]. Further the study noted that youths never got disciplined appropriately even after engaging themselves in bad behaviors within the institutions. Moreover, teenagers who engaged in violent activities were likely to be engaged in the same activities. The research also noted that institutions that neighbor other institutions that contain a high rate of violence are likely to experience the same violent incidents the research concluded that teachers do play big role in children who are always socially inept and emotionally unstable by making sure that they have a suitable and good learning environment.

Wellbeing of people in schools and working places is of much advantage to people globally. A number of organizations have come up with safety measures and a number of schools have now been a good and suitable place for studying. However, in schools lot of insecurity cases have been disclosed. Across the planet, the populations of children who die have increased, get injuries due to the violence, fights and disasters that happen. A lot of students have died in preventable incidents such as fights involving guns in America, drug abuse, the Indian school fires and the Chinese school blast.

Institution tragedies like Russia brutally killing of teachers and students made schools acquire protection from the military so as they can act as guards, such activities are the cause of the implementation of institution securities and safety policies. In France, institution officials and police officers work together and organizes meeting during the beginning of each semester to acquire the security details. Police authorities more often work win hand with the school administration. At the beginning of each term the school committee and police officers meet to come up with information of the school security. Mostly the police were posted at the gates of public institutions to maintain good traffic flow and provide security and report any suspicious activities. During this time, schools in France used police officers to ensure that there was a steady flow of traffic in school area and also ensured that the school had a lot of security [12].

A study on school safety in Kampala, Uganda, noted that partners such as the local government, national government, parents, communities, private and public sectors have not yet addressed the safety of education environment but have tried to put effort in the aspects of learning infrastructure quality [13]. The study showed strengthening duties of students, teachers, and parents have helped improve learning quality by implementation of safe schools contact (S.S.C). Accordingly, the MOE and Sports in Ugandan and USAID before the year 2008 ended they had started over 200 schools to S.C.C. This was aimed at enhancing safety in schools. This programmer assisted the board members of school to notice certain issues; the effects of lack of safety among students and plans on how to uplift their safety.

A study conducted on impacts of safety measures on results of primary schools in Mombasa County - Kenya. This research was based on finding the degree of well-being awareness, determine the level on which well-being measures are and find out the plans put in place by quality assurance officers and head teachers in the implementation of well-being measures in primary institution in Mombasa County. Stratified random sampling technique was chosen to test a size of 4797 people and a descriptive survey was used [14]. The use of questionnaires was implemented so as to acquire data. The information acquired was analyzed through inferential statistics and descriptive statistics methods. Primary data was collected through questionnaires. Collected data was analyzed through descriptive and inferential methods. This results of the research shows that the safety of the primary institutions in Kilifi, were in a very bad condition because of the non-implementation of the well-being measures in most schools. The research did show that the safety policies were not put into place due to language barrier, lack of capital and negligence of duty. The study did suggest that all principals to make sure that the emergency exercises are done often than usual to, make sure that everyone is prepared and that emergency kits and first aid kits are purchased.

Omolo and Sinatwa (2010) carried out research in Kisumu west district and Kisumu east district. They found out many institutions had respected and put in place the safety measures but all institutions had not put the safety measures fully. This was because some of the rental houses built for head teachers had not been occupied thus raising questions onto why the buildings had been constructed. Thus the students who were in boarding schools were not properly monitored. The research also did show that between 2004 and 2006 there were no fire extinguishers drills done [15].

3. Research Design and Methodology

3.1. Research Design

A research design is mainly about the layout for information analysis, collection and its measurement [16]. A descriptive survey research design was adopted in this study to collect and analyze the opinions of the respondents on their experience on children safety and delivery of early childhood. Using this design the researcher attempted to find answers to questions by

assessing how children safety influenced delivery of early childhood education. The target population for this study was 6,217 which comprised of parents, ECDE teachers and Sub County ECD Officers, Preschool Teachers and Enrolled Pre-School Children in the six wards in Mwatate Sub County. A sample size of 361 respondents was selected using stratified sampling from the Morgan and Krejcie (1970) [17] table as shown in Appendix IV.

Table 1. Sampling Grid

Stratum	(N)Target Population	(S) Sample Size
Pre-school teachers and Sub County ECD Officers	281	14
Wusi Kishamba Ward	947	54
Bura Ward	975	54
Chawia Ward	986	55
Rong'e Juu Ward	873	50
Rong'e Nyika Ward	731	62
Mwatate Ward	1424	72
Total	6217	361

Table 2. Krejcie and Morgan Table

N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S
10	10	100	80	280	162	800	260	2800	338
15	14	110	86	290	165	850	265	3000	341
20	19	120	92	300	169	900	269	3500	246
25	24	130	97	320	175	950	274	4000	351
30	26	140	103	340	181	1000	276	4500	351
35	32	150	108	360	186	1100	285	5000	357
40	36	160	113	380	181	1200	291	6000	361
45	40	180	118	400	196	1300	297	7000	364
50	44	190	123	420	201	1400	302	8000	367
55	48	200	127	440	205	1500	306	9000	368
60	52	210	132	460	210	1600	310	10000	373
65	56	220	136	480	214	1700	313	15000	375
70	59	230	140	500	217	1800	317	20000	377
75	63	240	144	550	225	1900	320	30000	379
80	66	250	148	600	234	2000	322	40000	380
85	70	260	152	650	242	2200	327	50000	381
90	73	270	155	700	248	2400	331	75000	382
95	76	270	159	750	256	2600	335	100000	384

Note: "N" is Population Size
"S" is Sample Size.

Self-administered structured questionnaires were used to collect data from respondents through drop and pick method. Structured questionnaires had closed ended questions that were simple to analyze and aided in obtaining quantitative data. Likert scale with 5 response categories was used to measure research variables (what are these variables). Piloting of the research instruments was done to ensure content validity, correct wording, clarity of expression and understandability. Piloting was done on a sample of 10% of the respondents that were excluded from the final study. Cronbach alpha coefficient method was used to test the reliability of the research tools as shown in Table 3. The research instruments were tested and pretested on the randomly selected respondents to ensure that the research tools were accurate and would be correct to be used by others. Content validity was used for this purpose.

Table 3. Reliability Test

Variables	No. of items	Cronbach alpha coefficients
Children Safety	5	0.84
Sanitation	7	0.78
ECD Center Building	7	0.82
Nutrition	6	0.87
Government policy	5	0.80
Early Childhood Education	6	0.81
Average		0.82

Source: Field Data (2019).

The quantitative data in this research was analyzed by descriptive and inferential statistics with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 24). In this study, descriptive statistics included means, percentages and frequency tables. The model $Y = B_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \epsilon$ was subjected to a test using linear regression to establish whether children safety was a predictor of delivery of early childhood education.

$$Y = B_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \epsilon$$

Y =Dependent Variable (Delivery of Early Childhood Education)

B₀= Constant

β₁= Partial Regression Coefficient

X₁= Children Safety

ε = Standard Error.

The researcher endeavored to maintain ethics while carrying out this study. The researcher ensured respondents participated voluntarily, kept their information secret and informed the participants before taking part in the exercise. A letter of transmittal was written by the research to prove and show the respondents that the study was for educational importance and notifying them of their secrecy on their identity.

4. Findings

The respondents for this study included male and females of varied ages between 20-61 years (were these preschool teachers). The response rate for the study was 83%. The findings were generated from self-administered questionnaires distributed among the respondents aided by statistical software. What were the categories of your respondents? Did you observe preschool classrooms? How many preschool children were involved in the study? Three hundred and sixty one (361) respondents were expected to respond to research questions, out of which only 298 respondents answered, representing a response rate of 83%.

4.1. Children Safety on Early Childhood Education

Quantitative data in this research was analyzed by descriptive and inferential statistics. Linear regression was used to establish whether children safety was a predictor of delivery of early childhood education.

The participants were questioned on the level by which children safety influenced early childhood education.

According to order of mean rank: Children lead safety increased early school attendance had 2.29 as the mean with 1.30 being the standard deviation; Safety of pupils in school contributed to their performance in schools had 2.16 being the mean and 1.33 as the standard deviation; Unsafe school facilities endangered pupils' life while in schools had 2.10 as the mean with 1.31 as the standard deviation; Lack of safety makes some pupils to be late in school had 1.96 as the mean with 1.22 as the standard deviation; Some parents were involved in securing pupils and school items had 1.93 as the mean with 1.17 as the standard deviation.

Table 4 illustrates the respondents' opinion on children safety and delivery of early childhood Education.

Table 4. Respondents Opinion on Children Safety and Delivery of Early Childhood Education

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Children lead safety increases early school attendance	298	2.29	1.300
Safety of pupils in school contribute to their performance in schools	298	2.16	1.329
Unsafe school facilities endanger pupils' life while in schools	298	2.10	1.310
Lack of safety makes some pupils to be late in school	298	1.96	1.218
Some parents are involved in securing pupils and school items	298	1.93	1.167
Valid N (list wise)	298		

Source: Field data (2019).

4.1.1. Correlation between children safety and Early Childhood Education

Table 5 below shows correlation analysis between children safety and its influence on early childhood education. The significance value at 95% confidence level as found to be 0.000 which was less than 0.5 hence means children safety had a positive significance influence on delivery of early childhood education.

Table 5. Correlation Analysis

		Early Childhood Education	Children safety
Early Childhood Education (ECE)	Pearson Correlation	1	.356*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
Children safety	Pearson Correlation	.356*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	

a. List wise N=298
b. * Significant at 0.05 level.

4.1.2. Relationship between Children safety and Early Childhood Education

According to the table below; R^2 is 0.127 that means the presence of 12.7% difference in early childhood education as a result of any variation in children safety. The coefficient of correlation (R) showed that the relationship strength between those variables. The research discovered that happened to be 0.356 that describes the existence of a positive relation between children safety and early childhood education.

Table 6. Regression Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.356 ^a	.127	.083	.204

a. Predictors: (Constant), Children Safety (CS)
b. Dependent Variable: Early Childhood Education (ECE)

The variance analysis in the table below demonstrated a 0.000 significance value which is below 0.05 and therefore the model of regression was fit. This demonstrated a significant relation between children safety and early childhood education.

Table 7. ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.121	1	.121	2.909	.000 ^b
	Residual	.833	20	.042		
	Total	.955	21			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Children Safety (CS)
b. Dependent Variable: Early Childhood Education (ECE)

The research discovered, children safety where held to a constant zero, early childhood education would be 4.167. Besides a unit increase in children safety would lead to an increase in early childhood education by a factor of 0.167 as shown in the Table below.

Table 8. Regression Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	4.167	.464		8.980	.000
	Children Safety (CS)	.167	.098	.356	1.706	.004

a. Predictors: (Constant), Children Safety (CS)
b. Dependent Variable: Early Childhood Education (ECE).

4.2. Discussions of Findings

The study found that children safety influenced early childhood education positively by a 0.167 factor, the study found that children lead safety increased school attendance with the highest mean of 2.29 while the parents involved in securing pupils and school items had the lowest mean of 1.23. These findings are in line with World Bank (2008) study which investigated the importance children safety in education and stated that most causes of loss of quality of life, illness and death are outcomes of poor infrastructure thus making infrastructure as a moral and economic imperative. Conducting a research on Children safety constituted the major mechanisms to increase employment opportunities income productivity thus directly influencing education by enrolment, excellent facilities for play and learning and sustainability of the ECD center programs. Children grow and learn best in a safe environment where they are protected from neglect and stress (Center for Disease Control & Prevention, 2020). Young children thrive when they have secure, positive relationship with adults who are knowledgeable about how to support their learning. Early childhood has profound consequences on a child's future

and what a child experiences and is exposed to influences greatly to a child development and wellbeing (National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine, 2001). Similarly, this study found that children safety influences early childhood education positively.

5. Recommendations

According to the results the research made a recommendation, for increased early childhood education effectiveness, safety of children should be prioritized. The parents' involvement in securing pupils and school items in schools should be avoided.

For enhanced early childhood education success, sanitation has to be ensured at the centers to avoid absenteeism due to diseases and dehydration.

The study recommended that for outstanding performance in early childhood education then ECD Center buildings is paramount especially throughout the sub counties. Therefore, it was necessary that learning condition that met children formative needs made them to incorporate unique needs, feel sheltered and agreeable and that they had a place for study.

6. Conclusion

Children safety influenced positively provision of early childhood education and increased attendance of children in schools.

Acknowledgements

I glorify and honor the almighty God for giving me the gift of life through my studies. I have great pleasure to give my special and heartfelt thanks to my supervisor Dr. John Ng'asike for the technical guidance, expertise, mentorship and support in his characteristic humble and respectful way. My special gratitude is extended to my lecturers at the School of Education of the Mount Kenya University -Mombasa Campus. Special appreciation goes to the entire staff at the County Government of Taita Taveta in the Department of Education for providing information and support that I needed throughout the research. Many thanks to my colleagues at work and at the

University for their great Support and encouragement throughout the process. Finally, I thank God for my parents, Cypriano Muchai and my late mother, Elizabeth Kaguuru. May her soul rest in eternal peace! May God bless all the acknowledged.

References

- [1] Vandenbroeck, M., *Diversity in early childhood services*. Encyclopedia on early childhood development [online], 2011. 16.
- [2] Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, *Safe Youth, Safe Schools*. 2020.
- [3] Minh, A., et al., *A review of neighborhood effects and early child development: How, where, and for whom, do neighborhoods matter?* Health & place, 2017. 46: p. 155-174.
- [4] Education for All, *Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2008: Education for All by 2015. Will We Make It?* 2007: Oxford University Press.
- [5] Tovey, H., *Playing outdoors: Spaces and places, risk and challenge*. 2007: McGraw-Hill Education (UK).
- [6] Agbenyega, J.S., *Early childhood education in sub-Saharan Africa, in Oxford Bibliographies*. 2013, Oxford University Press. p. 1-19.
- [7] Friedman, A.L. and S. Miles, *Stakeholders: Theory and practice*. 2006: Oxford University Press on Demand.
- [8] Maslow, A.H., *A theory of human motivation*. Readings in managerial psychology, 1989. 20: p. 20-35.
- [9] Duszka, C., *The effects of school safety on school performance*. International Journal of Education and Social Science, 2015. 2(8): p. 29-37.
- [10] Tengilimoglu, D., E. Celik, and A. Guzel, *The effect of safety culture on safety performance: Intermediary role of job satisfaction*. Journal of Economics, Management and Trade, 2016: p. 1-12.
- [11] McGaha-Garnett, V., *The effects of violence on academic progress and classroom behavior: from a parent's perspective*. Ideas and Research You Can Use: VISTAS, 2013.
- [12] Cavanagh, S., *Schools Abroad Brace against Terrorism*. Education week, 2004. 24(6): p. 1-16.
- [13] Lulua, L., *Addressing school Safety in Kampala: UPHOLD-USAID*. 2008, Uganda.
- [14] Mong'are, S.N., *Status of safety measures and their effects on performance in public primary schools in Kilifi Sub-County, Kilifi County-Kenya*. 2015, Kenyatta University.
- [15] Omolo, O.D. and W.M.E. Simatwa, *An assessment of the implementation of safety policies in public secondary schools in Kisumu east and west districts, Kenya*. Educational research 2010. 1 (11): p. 637-649.
- [16] Cooper, D.R. and P.S. Schindler, *Métodos de Pesquisa em Administração-12ª Edição*. 2016: McGraw Hill Brasil.
- [17] Krejcie, R.V. and D.W. Morgan, *Determining sample size for research activities*. Educational and psychological measurement, 1970. 30(3): p. 607-610.

