

Abstract

This study was designed to investigate whether child-headed families have influence on pre-school learners' class participation. The study was carried out in Mwingi zone of Kitui County Kenya. The zone had a total of 67 public pre-schools and the study targeted all the 67 public pre-schools, 1030 pre-school learners and 88 pre-school teachers. The researcher employed descriptive survey design so as to get information from the sampled respondents. The researcher obtained the sample size of the study by using both probability and non-probability sampling techniques. The sampling techniques included stratified random sampling and purposive sampling. The schools in the zone were grouped into five clusters namely: Musukini, Kanzanzu, Mwingi, Ithumbi and Kyethani. The researcher used a representative sample of 10% of the targeted preschool learners and 20.5% of the targeted preschool teachers. To collect data from the respondents, the researcher used questionnaires and observation checklists. The questionnaires were used to collect data from pre-school teachers, while observation checklists were used to collect data from pre-school learners. After collecting the data, the researcher processed it by editing, coding, classifying and tabulating it and then analyzed the processed data using descriptive analysis, frequency distribution tables and percentages and Pearson Correlation Tables. The findings of the study indicated that there was a strong negative correlation ($r = -0.891$, $P < 0.05$) between child-headed families and the class participation of pre-school learners. The study recommended that, the pre-schools should be encouraged to be conducting frequent guidance and counseling sessions for learners from child-headed families. Pre-school class teachers should also identify the learners who are not active in class participation and encourage them to be active in class by offering rewards.