

Perceptions of parents towards pre-primary education in Mbeya city Tanzania

Annastazia Mwakipesile

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This study assessed parents' perceptions towards pre-primary education in Mbeya City. The objectives of the study were to explore parent's perceptions towards preprimary education, examine parent's involvement in pre-primary education and to identify factors that influence parent's perceptions and their involvement in preprimary education. The study involved ten wards out of 26 wards from Mbeya City those wards were obtained through simple random sampling, 142 respondents who were parents with children aged five to six years and obtained through purposive sampling. The study was guided by the theory of Reasoned Action and Planned behavior. The study used mixed research approach and descriptive survey design to collect data using close ended questionnaires and unstructured interview. The quantitative data were coded and analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20. The package allowed descriptive statistics of frequencies and percentages in figures and tables where by qualitative data were analysed by using content analysis. The findings revealed those parents' perceptions towards pre-primary education and involvement varies due to different factors such as parents' income, age, gender, and geographical location. Also On the other hand involvement of parents in pre-primary education varies as it revealed that in practice only 30% of parents were involved. The study concluded that the factors that influenced parents' perceptions were geographical location, nature of parents' work, religious belief and factors for the parent's involvement in pre-primary education which are perceived benefits, perceived risks and perceived control can be reduced through building public pre-primary education centers in every village and street. In addition, the government should provide clear information about the importance of pre-primary education to their children and by preparing community sensitization meetings as ministry of health did normally on vaccination of children Also the Education and Training Policy as well as Education Act should list down the roles of parents on how they should be involved in pre-primary education when they make amendment on the education policy and education act.