

**AN INVESTIGATION OF THE IMPLICATIONS OF MATERNAL ALCOHOLISM  
ON PRESCHOOL CHILDREN'S LEARNING OUTCOMES IN  
EMBU EAST SUB-COUNTY, KENYA**

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF MASTER OF EDUCATION DEGREE IN  
EARLY CHILDHOOD STUDIES OF MOUNT KENYA UNIVERSITY**

**OCTOBER, 2015**

## ABSTRACT

Preschool children have in the recent past manifested instances of dismal performance. Their performance in problem solving, basic numeracy, language and creativity skills has been below expectations due to low maternal involvement. Thus, this study intended to investigate the relationship between maternal alcoholism and learning outcomes of preschool children in Embu East Sub-county, Embu County, Kenya. The objectives of the study included; mother to child interactions, mothers' mental health problems, and family history of alcohol abuse and length of time of alcohol abuse in relation to learning outcomes of preschool. The study was guided by the Disease Theory of Alcoholism. The study adopted a mixed method approach since it involved collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data. The study applied explanatory sequential design which involved mixing both quantitative and qualitative research and methods. The target population for this study comprised 67 preschool managers, 78 preschool teachers, 134 Mothers' Representatives and 2129 preschool children all totaling to 2408. Using The Central Limit Theorem, the researcher sampled 10 preschools (14.9% of 67) and 300 respondents (12.5% of 2408). Stratified sampling was used to create 6 different strata based on the number of zones. From each stratum, 2 preschools and 2 preschool managers and 4 preschool teachers were selected using simple random sampling. The researcher then applied simple random sampling to select 7 Mothers' Representatives and 38 preschool children from each stratum. Questionnaires, interview schedules and observation checklist were used to collect data. Piloting of research instruments was conducted amongst 2 preschool managers and 3 preschool teachers to establish validity, reliability, credibility and dependability. Reliability was obtained through test re-test method and reliability coefficient of  $r = 0.6$  was obtained using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Method. Qualitative data was analyzed thematically whereas the basic quantitative data was analyzed inferentially using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) Test Analysis in Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS version 21). The findings of the study were presented using tables. Educators, teachers and other stakeholders should encourage mothers to understand that their behavior such as alcoholism has drastic effects on the behavioral patterns of their children which, in turn, impacts negatively on their children's acquisition of basic numeracy, language and creativity skills. Alcoholic mothers should be advised to seek rehabilitation in order to improve their selfimage before their children which, in turn, enhances their children's acquisition of basic numeracy, language and creativity skills. Mothers should seek guidance and counseling services to understand their alcoholism erodes the confidence their children have in them as academic role models who assist in homework and responding to their immediate education demands. Parents should collaborate with teachers to ensure that they provide a social learning which cultivates children's holistic growth through positive social interactions with peers and adults. Mothers should be made to understand that their substance abuse sow seeds of mistrust, guilt and fear which affects their academic performance and thus they need to change. Ministry of Education should help mothers adopt practices such as good behavior devoid of alcoholism which can enhance positive interactions with their children as a strategy for enhancing their learning outcomes.