

**EATING DISORDERS AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF PRE-SCHOOL
CHILDREN IN MBEERE NORTH SUB-COUNTY,
EMBU COUNTY**

LILIAN KABURA NJONDE

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ABSTRACT

Academic performance of preschool children has been poor and has thus been a concern to many education stakeholders. Thus, the study intended to explore the relationship between bulimia nervosa and preschool children's academic performance in Mbeere North Sub-county, Embu County, Kenya. The literature was reviewed based on the analysis of preschool children's feeding habits, eating disorders in relation acquisition of problem solving, playing and language skills. This study was conducted in an attempt to identify the effects of eating disorders on academic performance of preschool children. The study applied concurrent triangulation in which the researcher implemented the quantitative and qualitative methods during the same timeframe and with equal weight. The study population for this study comprised 35 pre-schools with a target population of 35 pre-school managers, 83 preschool teachers, 70 parents' representatives and 1212 pre-school learners in Mbeere North Sub-county all totaling to 1400. Using The Central Limit Theorem of sample size determination, a sample of 10 pre-schools, that is, 28.57% of the targeted 35 pre-schools, was selected. Thus, from The Central Limit Theorem, the researcher sampled 300 respondents, that is, 21.43% of 1400. The researcher then applied stratified sampling to create 5 strata based on the number of zones each consisting of 7 pre-schools. From each stratum, 2 pre-school managers and 5 preschool teachers were selected using purposive sampling based on the pre-schools with several cases of eating disorders and due to the fact that they hold responsibilities that bring them closer to the learners in order to relate their ideas and experiences to performance. The researcher then applied simple random sampling to select 4 parents' representatives and 49 pre-school children since this would help avoid the feeling of bias amongst the respondents. The collected data was analyzed qualitatively along the specific objectives and the basic quantitative data was analyzed using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) Test Analysis in Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Frequency counts of the responses will then be obtained to generate descriptive information about the respondents and to illustrate the general trend of findings on the various variables that were under investigation. The study findings were presented using percentages and tables. The study established that eating disorders are consequences of preschool children's eating habits. The study established that there is significant relationship between eating disorders and preschool children's acquisition of problem solving skills, playing and language skills. The study thus recommends that schools and other stakeholders need to educate parents and children on how to live a healthy lifestyle that includes proper nutrition. It also recommends that the government should formulate a policy to ensure adherence to the Kenya National Nutrition Action Plan of 2012 which enhances preschool nutrition and quality education.