



Available Online at EScience Press
International Journal of Education Foundations
ISSN: 3078-7866 (Online), 3078-7858 (Print)
<https://ijef.esciencepress.net>

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Higher Education Financing and the Realization of the Tanzania Development Vision 2050

^aMwoloha Moshi, ^bDaniel Oduor Onyango, ^bClara Rupia

^a Sengerema, District, Tanzania

^b Department of Education Foundation, St. Augustine University of Tanzania

Corresponding Author

Mwoloha Moshi, Email: bapropsk@gmail.com

Author's Contributions

All authors contributed equally to this research.

Article History

Received: September 28, 2025; Accepted: October 27, 2025; Published: November 10, 2025.

ABSTRACT

This paper aimed to assess the effectiveness of primary school entry age policy implementation on pupils' academic achievement in public primary schools in Sengerema District, Mwanza-Tanzania. Mixed research approach and convergent parallel research design were utilized to collect and analyze data. The study used the sample size of 80 teachers, 10 head teachers, 1 District Pre and Primary Education Officer (DPPEO), 1 District School Quality Assurance Officer (DSQEO) and 5 Ward Education Officers (WEOs). Furthermore, questionnaire and interview were used as instruments of data collection. The study reveals significant gaps in awareness among teachers and stakeholders regarding the primary school entry age policy, highlighting the need for improved communication and targeted outreach. Many respondents expressed a lack of clarity about enrollment criteria, timelines, and methods for attracting students, which could hinder effective enrollment practices and negatively impact children's readiness for school. Interviews with education officials emphasized the importance of professional development workshops, community engagement, and regular assessments to enhance understanding of the policy. The research underscores that fostering informed and engaged educational communities is crucial for ensuring timely access to quality education, ultimately contributing to better educational outcomes and social equity. Recommendations include comprehensive training for educators, collaboration with community leaders, and multi-channel outreach initiatives to bridge the knowledge gap and promote effective enrollment strategies.

Keywords: Teachers' awareness; School entry age policy; pupils' academic achievement

INTRODUCTION

School entry age is a critical topic in educational research, as it can significantly impact children's readiness for formal education and long-term academic and social outcomes. According to Reynolds and Ou (2011), the question of primary school entry age is significant because it can affect children's readiness for formal education. Dockett and Perry (2017) view school entry age as a period of adjustment to a new social and educational environment, while Neiman et al. (2022)

define it as the transition from early childhood education to formal schooling, involving a shift from play-based learning to structured and academically focused activities. Moreover, primary school entry age is the formalized number of years for standard one enrollment. Wang and Eccles (2013) observe that pupils' academic achievement is defined as the successful completion of learning objectives, which can be measured through test or examination scores and the contextual application of the content taught, serving

as a parameter for pupils' success in the learning process. Thus, pupils' academic achievement refers to the meeting the leaning objectives in the learning process.

Research indicates that primary school entry age significantly impacts children's academic achievement across various countries. In Germany, older students generally outperform younger peers in standardized tests (Kruger & Marcus, 2016), while early entry can foster social adjustment and confidence (Muller & Wagner, 2015). In England, later school entry correlates with better social adaptability and emotional maturity (Smith & Brown, 2018), though younger pupils may eventually catch up (Wilson & Brown, 2019). In the U.S., early starters tend to achieve higher reading scores (Johnson & Brown, 2018), while in Canada, findings are mixed, with some research suggesting that earlier entry leads to higher early academic success (Smith et al., 2015), while others argue for the benefits of later entry (Johnson & Brown, 2018). Lastly, in China, early entry is linked to improved academic performance, particularly in language and math, but also impacts social-emotional development (Wang & Li, 2015; Liu & Cui, 2017). Overall, school entry age plays a critical role in shaping students' academic and social outcomes across these contexts.

In several African countries, the primary school entry age of six years significantly influences academic achievement and development. In Ghana, early school entry is linked to better mathematics and reading comprehension skills (Mensah & Ampom, 2018). Similarly, in Nigeria, the entry age affects not only academic performance (Adeniji, 2017) but also social and emotional development (Ogunleye, 2018). In South Africa, older learners who repeated Grade 1 demonstrated higher academic scores, suggesting that age positively impacts learning outcomes (Moenieb et al., 2018). In Kenya, variations in entry age correlate with cognitive development, underscoring the need for equitable academic opportunities (Ongeri & Ndung'u, 2020; Njoroge, 2017). Additionally, in Uganda, while older pupils generally exhibit better cognitive readiness and achievement (Nakato, 2013; Kijambu & Balunywa, 2018), some studies suggest younger pupils can also perform well academically (Namatovu, 2017). Overall, the primary school entry age plays a crucial role in shaping educational outcomes across these nations.

In Tanzania, primary education is essential for children's learning and social interaction, with the Education and Training Policy of 2014 mandating enrollment at age

seven. Despite this aim to combat illiteracy and ensure compulsory basic education, the policy's implementation has faced significant challenges, evidenced by declining enrollment rates from 2016 to 2023, with fluctuations ranging from -15% to 10%. In Sengerema district, inefficiencies in the enrollment process often result in a mix of under- and over-age pupils, which hampers academic progress. Contributing factors include teachers' lack of awareness regarding the entry age policy, limited parental involvement, weak school leadership, and poor relations with local authorities. Consequently, many pupils are not enrolled at the appropriate age, delaying their acquisition of necessary knowledge and skills. This study aims to assess the effectiveness of primary school entry age policy implementation on pupils' academic achievement in public primary schools in Sengerema District, Mwanza region in Tanzania.

Statement of the Problem

The Tanzania Education and Training Policy of 2014 states that for the primary school entry age, every child aged seven years, after attending pre-primary education, must be enrolled in primary school for standard one and attend school for the whole period of studies. Despite the provision of free fee education from pre- primary level up to advanced level (form five and form six) still teachers' awareness of primary school entry age policy is a big challenge in Sengerema district particularly in public primary schools. The enrollment of standard one pupils is decreasing year after year. The URT (2017-2023) respectively indicates that the enrollment trend of standard one pupils is unsatisfactory, in a sense that in 2017-2018 the enrollment was decreased up to 0.5%, 2018-2019 the enrollment was decreased up to -0.4%, 2019-2020 the enrollment was decreased up to 0.3%, 2020-2021 decreased up to -0.3%, 2021-2022 the decrease was 0.1% and in 2022-2023 the decrease was 0.2%. This led to some of children who have an appropriate age for enrollment to miss the right to basic education. This has influenced the researcher to conduct research on the effectiveness of primary school entry age policy implementation on pupils' academic achievement in public primary schools in Sengerema District.

Specific Objectives

To assess the effectiveness of primary school entry age policy implementation on pupils' academic achievement in public primary schools in Sengerema District

Conceptual Framework

According to Friedman (2013), a conceptual framework

organizes and synthesizes ideas and concepts, allowing researchers to identify potential relationships or causal links among variables. It needs to show an actual picture of an idea that has been analyzed, and it shows the direction in which the researcher is

concerned about the study. Figure 1 clearly illustrates the relationship between the independent variable, effectiveness of primary school entry age policy implementation, and the dependent variable, pupils' academic achievement.

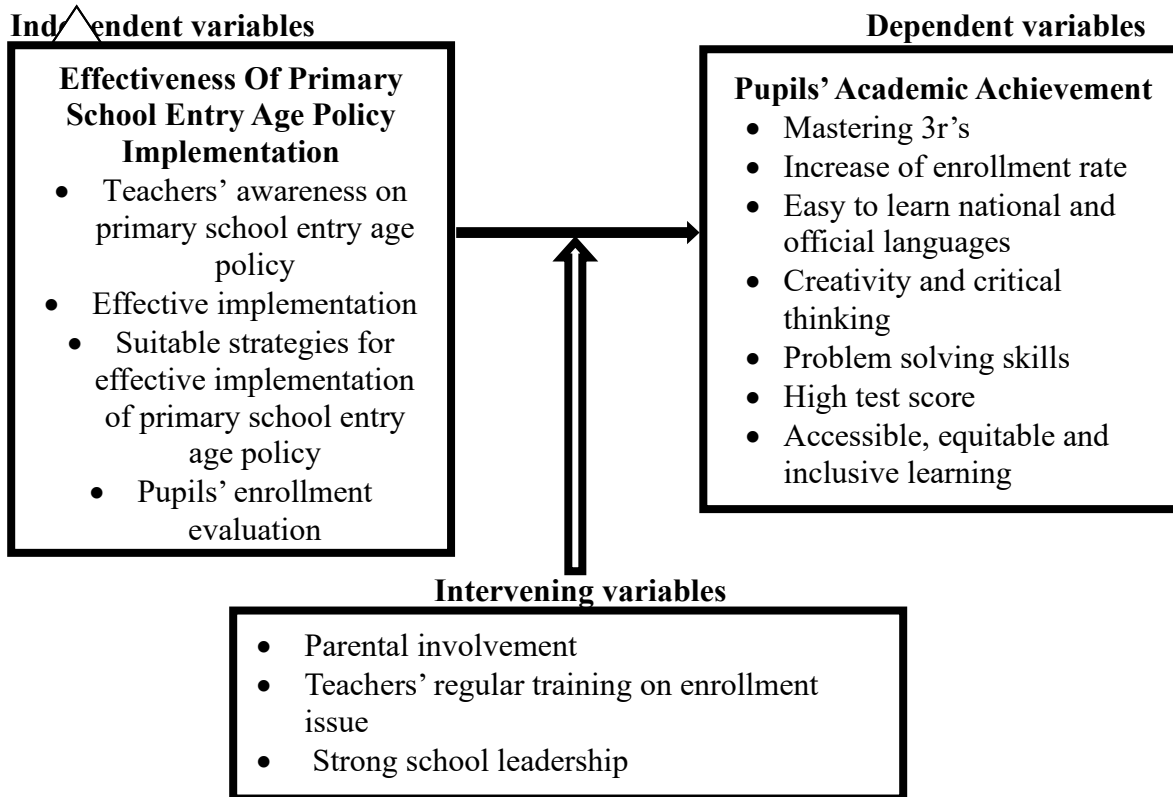


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Source: Researcher, (2024)

In this conceptual framework, independent variables, such as effectiveness of primary school entry age policy implementation, influence the dependent variables, which include pupils' academic achievement. Intervening variables, such as parental involvement and school resources, can further mediate this relationship by either enhancing or hindering the impact of teachers' awareness on student outcomes. Understanding these dynamics helps educators and policymakers identify areas for improvement and implement strategies that support both teachers and students in achieving better academic results.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

This study employs Piaget's Cognitive Development Theory, which outlines the distinct stages of cognitive development: sensorimotor, preoperational, concrete, and formal operational as children mature (Piaget,

1936). The theory's strengths include its recognition of individual cognitive variation, emphasizing that children progress at their own pace, which can influence academic achievement (Hughes, 2018). It also underscores the importance of developmentally appropriate practices and hands-on learning experiences (Duckworth, 2012), aligning curriculum with cognitive stages to enhance educational outcomes (Berk, 2013). However, critiques of Piaget's theory highlight its limited focus on early primary years and the social-emotional factors affecting academic success (Diamond, 2013; Goswami, 2018). To address these limitations, this study emphasizes the preoperational stage and the benefits of early enrollment, promoting cognitive, social, and emotional development through peer interaction. Overall, Piaget's theory is relevant as it guides the understanding of how primary school entry age impacts academic achievement, helping educators implement the policy effectively (Keating, 2014).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Teachers in Canada and France demonstrate a strong awareness of primary school entry age policies and their implications for child development. Pelletier (2018) found that Canadian teachers recognize the importance of considering individual readiness for school, as well as the challenges younger students may face, including social and emotional difficulties (Jenkins et al., 2019). Bonnie et al. (2020) emphasized that this understanding aids teachers in making informed decisions about school entry based on each child's needs. Similarly, Driessen and Smith (2014) revealed that French teachers are highly aware of school entry age policies and adjust their teaching methods to accommodate various developmental levels, showing support for flexible entry policies. Baudelot and Estabiet (2013) further noted that French educators understand the legal requirements for school entry and recognize how these policies can facilitate smoother transitions to formal schooling. Overall, the awareness of primary school entry age policies among teachers in both countries enables them to implement these policies effectively and support children's development.

Eze and Opara (2019) conducted a study on teachers' awareness of the primary school entry age policy in Abia state. The study revealed that teachers in Abia state were generally aware of the school entry age policy. However, there was a lack of uniformity in their understanding and interpretation of the policy (Eze & Opara, 2019). Adeyemi and Babajide (2016) revealed that teachers in Lagos State had a good level of awareness of the school entry age policy and its implications for children's education. Olaleye (2018) found that teachers in Oyo State were generally aware of the school entry age policy; however, there were concerns about the implementation and enforcement of the policy. Furthermore, Oyekale (2017) reported that teachers in Osun State had varying levels of awareness and compliance with the school entry age policy, with some expressing a lack of clarity on the specific age requirements. Nigerian teachers are partially aware of the primary school entry age policy. Thus they need more support to keep them updated about the school entry age policy.

The United Nations Children's Education Fund (2019) study on teachers' awareness of the primary school entry age policy found that there is a lack of awareness among teachers in Kenya regarding the appropriate school entry age. The study revealed that many teachers were unaware of the official guidelines on

school entry age. As a result, children were either subjected to early entry or delayed entry into formal schooling. The Kenya Institute of Education (2017) found that while the government had established a policy on school entry age, many teachers were not adequately informed about it. As a result, there were cases of children being enrolled in school at an age that did not align with the official policy, leading to potential negative educational outcomes. The University of Nairobi (2018) also highlighted the lack of awareness among teachers regarding the school entry age policy in Kenya. The study found that there was a need for more targeted teacher training and professional development to ensure that educators were well-informed about the official guidelines. The studies that were conducted show that Kenyan teachers need purposeful support in making them well-informed about the primary school entry age policy to bring effectiveness during the policy implementation. Moreover, the inadequacy of teachers' awareness of the primary school entry age policy might negatively affect pupils' academic expectations.

Mushi and Mpangala (2013) in Tanzania undertook a study on teachers' awareness of the primary school entry age policy and found that the majority of teachers in Tanzania were aware of the importance of the school entry age policy in ensuring that children were developmentally ready for formal education. Mtahabwa (2017) reported that teachers in Tanzania had mixed awareness about the school entry age policy, with some expressing concerns about its implementation and the readiness of children to start school. Moreover, Lyimo and Sanga (2018) found that many teachers in Tanzania were familiar with the school entry age policy, but some expressed a need for more training and resources to effectively implement it in their classrooms. Mwageni and Rutayuga (2016) reported that teachers in Tanzania had varying levels of awareness about the school entry age policy, with some expressing confusion about the guidelines and recommendations for enrolling children in school. This implies that there is a need for the government to put in more effort in capacity building for all teachers to ensure that they have full awareness of the implementation of the primary school entry age policy, as they are the central implementers of the policy.

METHODOLOGY

This paper employed a mixed research approach and convergent parallel research design to collect and

analyze data. The study used the sample size of 80 teachers, 10 head teachers, 1 District Pre and Primary Education Officer (DPPEO), 1 District School Quality Assurance Officer (DSQEO) and 5 Ward Education Officers (WEOs). Moreover, the paper employed simple random sampling to select teachers and purposive sampling to get DPPEO, DSQEO and WEOs. Furthermore, questionnaire and interview were used as instruments of data collection. The research ensured the validity and reliability of instruments through expert feedback, pilot testing, and employing both qualitative and quantitative methods, including triangulation and the split-half reliability method. Ethical considerations were strictly adhered to, with necessary permissions obtained, confidentiality maintained, and participants' anonymity preserved throughout the study.

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

This study intended to the effectiveness of primary school entry age policy implementation on pupils' academic achievement in public primary schools from teachers, head teachers, DSQAO, DPPEO and WEOs in Sengerema district. Information presented in this section was obtained first from teachers who were required to respond to questionnaire by responding whether they strongly agree, agree, moderate, disagree or strongly disagree with the statements given. Secondly head teachers, WEOs and DEO were required to respond to questions through interview.

Table 1. Effectiveness of primary school entry age policy implementation on pupils' academic achievement

S/N	Statement	SA		A		N		D		SD	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1.	Clear understanding of the specific primary school entry age required	10	12.5	0	0	21	26.2	27	33.8	22	27.5
2.	Well informed when to start and when to end the standard one pupils' enrolment.	0	0	0	0	15	18.8	34	42.5	31	38.8
3.	Awareness on the criteria of which a child must meet so as to be enrolled as standard one pupil.	0	0	0	0	12	15	41	51.2	27	33.8
4.	Awareness on the ways used to get children required for enrolment	0	0	0	0	21	26.2	30	37.5	29	36.2
5.	Awareness on suitable measures to take when parents or guardians refuse to send their children having criteria for standard one enrollment.	0	0	1	1.2	13	16.2	32	40	34	42.5

Key: SA Mean Strongly agree, A means Agree, N means Neutral, D means Disagree and SD means Strongly Agree. F means Frequency and % means Percentage.

Source: Field Data (2024)

Table 1 aims to examine teacher's awareness about primary school entry age policy. The analysis was made regarding the statements provided in the table and they are presented as follows.

Clear Understanding of Primary School Entry Age

A total of 10 respondents (12.5%) strongly agreed, while 0 agreed. A significant portion, 21 (26.2%), were neutral, while 27 (33.8%) disagreed, and 22 (27.5%) strongly disagreed. The majority of respondents lack clarity on the entry age for primary school, indicating a gap in information that could hinder proper enrollment practices and may lead to children starting school at

inappropriate ages. On the contrast, PPDEO said that;

As the District Pre and Primary Education Officer, it is crucial to understand that the primary school entry age is between 7 to 13 years. Increasing awareness about these requirements is important for parents to ensure that children enroll in school on time and benefit from quality education. This also helps reduce the number of children who are out of school, thereby improving the overall education standard in the community (DPPEO, August, 2024).

This implies that understanding the age entry

requirements can help reduce the number of children without education, improve social and economic development, and ensure that children have equal opportunities for education, thus contributing to the sustainable development of the nation. Similarly, Pelletier (2018) shows that teachers are aware of primary school entry age policy through their understanding of the importance of considering the individual needs and readiness for school, the impact of early entry on learning outcomes, and during their decision-making about school entry.

Informed About Enrollment Periods for Standard One

No respondents strongly agreed or agreed. Neutral responses were recorded at 15 (18.8%), while 34 (42.5%) disagreed, and 31 (38.8%) strongly disagreed. This suggests a widespread lack of knowledge about when to start and end enrollment for standard one, which could result in missed opportunities for enrollment and possibly affect student readiness. In difference to that, head teacher provided that:

During the student enrollment period, we ensure that we follow the guidelines set by the government. We begin in October by announcing the enrollment dates for the school. We communicate with parents and the community to ensure that every child understands the registration process. Our goal is to ensure that no student misses the opportunity to join the school. Although we strive to communicate effectively with parents and the community, some families still face barriers that prevent them from fully understanding the registration process. (Interview with head teacher 1, August, 2024).

This implies that the communication methods used is not sufficient to reach all families effectively. It suggests a need for a more inclusive approach that considers the diverse backgrounds and circumstances of the community. Addressing these gaps will not only enhance understanding but also foster greater trust and engagement among families during the enrollment process. Therefore, teachers and other education stakeholders should implement targeted outreach initiatives, such as community workshops, to better support families in navigating the registration process. Likewise, Li and Chen (2017), added that teachers have good understanding of the school entry age policy and its implications for children's development in schools. Therefore, they are well-equipped to guide parents in

making informed decisions about their child's readiness for school, ensuring a smoother transition and fostering positive developmental outcomes.

Awareness of Enrollment Criteria for Standard One

Again, no respondents strongly agreed or agreed, while 12 (15%) remained neutral. A notable 41 (51.2%) disagreed, and 27 (33.8%) strongly disagreed. The overwhelming disagreement indicates that many stakeholders do not understand the specific criteria for enrolling a child in standard one. This gap may lead to inconsistencies in the enrollment process and could disadvantage eligible children. Besides, WEO added that;

As the Ward Education Officer, the criteria for enrolling pupils are essential to ensure that pupils receive quality education. First, we monitor the age of the student, where they must be of appropriate age to enroll in primary education. Second, we collect health information of the pupils to ensure that they can fully participate in learning activities. Finally, we engage with parents to confirm the student's readiness in social and mental aspects (Interview, WEO, August, 2024).

This indicates that establishing clear enrollment criteria ensures that pupils are starting school at the appropriate age, which is crucial for their developmental readiness. Collecting health information helps identify any additional support that may be needed for students, promoting an inclusive educational environment. Engaging with parents fosters a strong school-community partnership, which is vital for the overall success of the pupils in their educational journey. Similarly, Zhang and Liu (2018) revealed that teachers were well-informed about the school entry age policy and were mindful of the potential implications for their pupils. Thus, teachers expressed awareness of the importance of age-appropriate instruction and assessment.

Awareness of Methods to Recruit Children for Enrollment

Similar to previous statements, there were no strong agreements or agreements. A significant 21 (26.2%) were neutral, while 30 (37.5%) disagreed, and 29 (36.2%) strongly disagreed. The lack of understanding regarding recruitment methods suggests that strategies to attract and enroll children may be ineffective. This could impact school population numbers and overall educational access. However, quality assurance officer provided response concerning awareness of methods

to recruit children for enrollment and he provided that;

As the Quality Assurance Officer, Besides the lack of understanding regarding recruitment methods suggesting potential ineffectiveness in attracting children, our strategies for recruiting teachers are essential for improving the quality of education in schools. First, we utilize a thorough vetting process to ensure that we hire qualified and skilled teachers. Second, we collaborate with teacher training colleges to source high-quality graduates who can make a difference in our schools. Finally, we ensure that we provide professional development opportunities for current teachers to enhance their skills (Interview, DSQAO, August, 2024).

This implies that implementing robust recruitment strategies enhances the overall quality of teaching, which directly impacts student learning outcomes. Collaborating with educational institutions not only helps recruit talented individuals but also contributes to building a pipeline of skilled educators for the future. Continuous professional development ensures that teachers remain equipped with the latest pedagogical approaches, fostering an adaptive learning environment that meets pupils' diverse needs. As supported by Bonnie et al. (2020), teachers are aware of primary school entry age policy through their understanding of the importance of considering the individual needs and readiness for school, the impact of early entry on learning outcomes, and during their decision-making about school entry.

Measures for When Parents Refuse Enrollment

No respondents strongly agreed or agreed. Only 1 respondent (1.2%) was neutral, while 13 (16.2%) disagreed, and a considerable 66 (82.5%) were split between strong disagreement and moderate disagreement. The high level of disagreement indicates that stakeholders feel unprepared to handle situations where parents refuse to enroll their eligible children. This reflects a potential need for training and resources to address parental concerns and facilitate enrollment. Moreover, concerning parental resistance in enrolling students, one of the head teachers said that;

As the head teacher, I recognize that parental resistance can impact the progress of our students. We engage with parents in meetings to understand their concerns and provide information about the importance of our programs. Additionally, we involve parents in various school activities to help them feel like

part of the team nurturing the pupils (Interview head teacher 2, August, 2024).

The results demonstrate that addressing parental resistance through communication and involvement can lead to stronger support for the school's initiatives, ultimately benefiting students. Creating a collaborative environment fosters trust and encourages parents to take an active role in their children's education, promoting a shared commitment to student success. In line with Olaleye (2018), teachers are aware of the school entry age policy; however, there were concerns about the implementation and enforcement of the policy. Thus, teachers need to provide understanding to parents on the entry policy to school. Overall, the high percentage of positive responses across all statements indicates a strong foundation of knowledge among teachers, which is critical for the successful implementation of primary school entry age policies.

Generally, the data reveals a significant gap in awareness and understanding among stakeholders regarding key aspects of primary school enrollment, including entry age, enrollment periods, criteria, and recruitment methods. For instance, a large portion of respondents 33.8% disagreeing and 27.5% strongly disagreeing indicates a lack of clarity about the primary school entry age policy, which could hinder appropriate enrollment practices. Additionally, with no respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing about being informed on enrollment periods for Standard One, and 42.5% disagreeing, it is evident that many parents and community members are not adequately informed about critical timelines. This lack of information could result in missed enrollment opportunities for children, negatively affecting their readiness and overall educational outcomes. Likewise, one of the head teachers suggested that:

It is important that we improve our communication strategies to ensure parents understand the enrollment process and timelines. We plan to host community meetings and distribute informational materials in various languages to reach all families. Our goal is to create an inclusive environment where every child has the opportunity to enroll on time (Interview, head teacher 10, September 2024).

This underscores the need for proactive measures to bridge the communication gap and engage parents effectively. By prioritizing inclusive outreach efforts, schools can enhance enrollment rates and support better educational outcomes for all students.

Moreover, the data underscores the importance of effective communication and targeted outreach strategies. With the Quality Assurance Officer emphasizing the need for robust recruitment methods and a thorough vetting process for teachers, it is clear that enhancing the quality of education begins with informed recruitment and professional development. The overwhelming disagreement regarding awareness of methods to recruit children for enrollment (37.5% disagreeing and 36.2% strongly disagreeing) suggests that schools may struggle to attract students effectively, thereby impacting educational access and diversity. Addressing these gaps through workshops, community engagement, and tailored communication efforts will not only foster greater awareness but also encourage parental involvement, ultimately contributing to improved educational standards and the successful implementation of primary school policies. In relation to cognitive development theory, effective communication and engagement can enhance the learning environment, which is crucial for children's cognitive growth. By ensuring that parents are informed and involved, schools can support children's readiness for learning, thereby fostering better educational outcomes that align with their developmental needs.

Nonetheless, respondents were asked open ended question to describe ways used to make a teacher aware of primary education entry age policy. Their response shows that to enhance teacher awareness of primary education entry age policies, professional development workshops can be a key strategy. These workshops should be designed to provide comprehensive information on the specific age requirements and the rationale behind them. Activities such as interactive discussions, case studies, and practical scenarios can help teachers understand the importance of timely enrollment. Providing supplementary materials, like handbooks or online resources, ensures that teachers have ongoing access to critical information. This approach not only equips educators with the necessary knowledge but also fosters a community of practice where teachers can share insights and strategies related to enrollment. As supported by Cognitive Development theory, the theory proposed that as children grow, they progress through four distinct stages of cognitive development, the sensory-motor, preoperational, concrete, and formal operational stages. These stages represent significant milestones in children's cognitive abilities and understanding of the world around them.

Additionally, DPPEO, added that;

As the District Education Officer, it is essential to ensure that teachers are aware of the primary school entry age policy. We accomplish this by providing training and workshops on these policies to eliminate any confusion among teachers and parents. Additionally, we conduct regular inspections to confirm that teachers are implementing the policy in their daily practices (Interview DPPEO, August, 2024).

This implies that ensuring that teachers are aware of the primary school entry age policy through training and workshops enhances their ability to provide accurate information to parents, fostering better understanding and compliance within the community. Furthermore, regular inspections not only hold teachers accountable but also reinforce the policy's importance, thereby contributing to improved educational standards and outcomes for students.

Moreover, WEO responded that;

As the Ward Education Officer, I have the responsibility to ensure that teachers and the community receive accurate information regarding the primary school entry age policy. We collaborate with community leaders to help raise awareness of the importance of this policy in enhancing children's education. Furthermore, we provide resources that assist teachers in understanding the policy criteria and how to apply them (Interview WEO, August, 2024).

This implies that by actively involving community leaders in raising awareness of the primary school entry age policy, we are fostering a collective responsibility towards children's education and well-being. Additionally, providing resources for teachers not only enhances their understanding and implementation of the policy but also strengthens the overall educational framework within the community. Moreover, Baudelot and Estabiet (2013) highlighted the importance of teachers being aware of each child's individual needs in their classroom and how the school entry age policy can impact their readiness for formal schooling. However, teachers are aware of the individual needs during the teaching and learning process, and they are aware that the school entry age policy is beneficial to children in their transition to formal schooling through school entry age policy teachers employ methods which accommodate the different developmental levels of

children in the classroom.

Furthermore, another effective method involves establishing regular communication channels within the school environment. Staff meetings, newsletters, and internal memos can serve as platforms for ongoing updates about entry age policies. Involving teachers in outreach programs aimed at educating parents about these policies can further reinforce their understanding and commitment. By actively engaging teachers in discussions about enrollment challenges and solutions, schools create a collaborative atmosphere that encourages shared responsibility. The implication of these strategies is that informed teachers are better positioned to guide parents and support timely enrollment, ultimately improving access to education for children and enhancing the overall effectiveness of the enrollment process. Likewise, DSQAO added that;

As the Quality Assurance Officer, I have a vital role in ensuring that teachers are aware of and implement the primary school entry age policy. We conduct regular assessments to see how teachers are working in accordance with this policy and provide additional guidance when necessary. This indicates that we are creating an environment that fosters accurate understanding among teachers and strengthens school activities (Interview DSQAO, August 2024).

This indicates that conducting regular assessments not only helps in identifying gaps in teachers' understanding of the primary school entry age policy but also ensures ongoing professional development. Furthermore, by providing additional guidance as needed, we are reinforcing the importance of adherence to the policy, which ultimately enhances the quality of education and school activities. Also, Piaget's cognitive development theory emphasizes awareness of child cognitive development stages which can help a child to learn easily the content and different skills for a child's better future. Likely to the teachers who are supposed to be aware of the primary school entry age policy which can help teachers to implement the policy effectively.

CONCLUSION

The research illustrates a clear need for improved communication and targeted outreach regarding primary school entry age policies. Addressing the gaps in understanding among teachers and parents can significantly enhance enrollment practices, ultimately contributing to better educational outcomes for

students. By prioritizing professional development and community engagement, schools can create an inclusive environment that fosters timely enrollment and supports children's readiness for formal schooling, aligning with both cognitive development theories and the broader goals of educational equity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommended that, to enhance effectiveness of primary school entry age policy implementation, it is essential for policymakers and education authorities to prioritize comprehensive training programs for teachers and school administrators. These programs should focus on the specifics of the policy, its implications for child development, and effective communication strategies with parents. Additionally, collaboration with community leaders and the use of multi-channel outreach methods such as workshops, informational materials in various languages, and community meetings would foster greater understanding among parents and guardians. It is also crucial to establish regular assessment and feedback mechanisms to identify gaps in knowledge and provide ongoing support. By creating a well-informed and engaged educational community, we can ensure that all children have timely access to quality education, ultimately contributing to improved educational outcomes and social equity.

REFERENCES

- Adeniji, E. E. (2017). Entry age and school readiness: A case study of primary one pupil in public primary schools in Lagos State. *Journal of Educational Research*, 12(3), 45-58.
- Adeyemi, T. O. & Babajide, V. F. (2016). *Teachers' Awareness and Implementation of School Entry Age Policy in Lagos State*, Nigeria. Zedek Resources Publishing Ministry.
- Baudelot, C., & Establet, R. (2013). *Suicides of the young in France: School context and social background. In Society and Adolescent Self-Image* (pp. 171-184). Routledge.
- Berk, L.E. (2013). *Child development*. Pearson Education
- Bonnie et al. (2020). The role of educators in supporting children's successful transition to school in Canada. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 43(1), 103-121.
- Diamond, A.(2013). Executive functions. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 70, 40(35), 135-168.

- Driessen, G., & Smith, F. (2014). Preschool management and teacher characteristics: Contributions to program quality in French early childhood education. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 29(4), 532-547.
- Duckworth, A.L. (2012). The significance of self-control. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 109(20), 20847-2085
- Eze, F. C. & Opara, I. U. (2019). *Teacher Awareness of School Entry Age Policy in Nigeria: A Case Study of Primary School Teachers in Abia State*. Lagos University Press
- Friedman, A. (2013). *Understanding research frameworks: A guide for social scientists*. Academic Press.
- Goswami, U. (2018). *Piaget's theory of cognitive development*. In *The Wiley Handbook of Cognitive Development* (pp. 1-24). Wiley Blackwell.
- Hughes, M. (2018). *Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development*. In UK. Peppler (Ed), *Encyclopedia of Out of School Learning*. SAGE Publications. pp. 552-553
- Johnson, S., & Brown, L. (2018). Primary school starting age and academic achievement: Evidence from a nationwide sample of Canadian children. *Canadian Journal of Education/Revue canadienne de l'éducation*, 41(2), 241-266.
- Keating, D.P. (2014). Cognitive and brain development. In R.M Lerner & M. E Lamb (Eds.), *Handbook of child psychology and developmental science: Cognitive processes*(7th ed.) (2), 97- 138.
- Kenya Institute of Education. (2017) "Assessment of Early Childhood Education in Kenya,". *The International Journal of Educational Management*, 32(4), 595-609.
- Kijjambu, M., & Balunywa, W. (2018). The Effect of Entry Age on Academic Achievement among Primary School Pupils in Central Uganda. *The International Journal of Educational Management*, 32(4), 595-609.
- Liu, Y., & Cui, Y. (2017). The effects of entry age on social-emotional development and academic achievement of Chinese primary school students. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 39, 4(32), 1-9.
- Lyimo, B., & Sanga, C. (2018). Teachers' Competence and Preparedness for Implementing the Education and Training Policy in Tanzania. *International Journal of Education and Development using Information and Communication Technology*, 14(3), 45-54.
- Mensah, J. A., & Ampong, M. (2018). The effect of primary entry age on reading comprehension skills in public primary schools in the Greater Accra Region. *Journal of Educational Studies*, 3(2), 50-60.
- Moenieb, Y., Meyer, A., Dobson, R., van Mourik, J., Lilian, J., & Stegen, F. (2018). South African grade 1 profiles by age of entry and perinatal risk: academic achievement over time. *South African Journal of Childhood Education*, 8(1), 1-12.
- Mtahabwa, L. (2017). The Efficiency of School Entry Age policy in Enhancing Quality of Basic Education in Tanzania. *International Journal of Education and Social Science*, 4(12), 79-87.
- Müller, H., & Wagner, K. (2015). Social and emotional effects of primary entry age on students: A case study in Germany. *International Journal of Child Development*, 39,32(2),321-330
- Mushi, B., & Mpangala, A. (2013). Teachers' Awareness and Their Practices on School Readiness of Children: The Case of Early Childhood Education Centers in Tanzania. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 4(13), 138-144.
- Mwagani, E., & Rutayuga, C. (2016). Teacher Factors Influencing Learners Performance in Standard Seven National Examination in Tanzania. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 7(4), 35-42.
- Nakato, J. A. (2013). Factors influencing academic performance of pupils in public primary schools in Masaka District, Uganda. *International Journal of Education and Research*, 1(9), 1-16.
- Namatovu, J. (2017). Primary School Entry Age and its Impact on Academic Achievement: A Case of Selected Public Schools in Uganda. *International Journal of Research-Granthaalayah*, 56, 5(4), 122-128
- Neimann, T., Felix., J.J., Shliakhovchuk, E & Hindmann. (2022). *Policy and practice challenges for equality in education*. IGI Global Publisher of Timely Knowledge.
- Njoroge, W. (2017). Primary entry age and academic achievement: A case study of public primary schools in Kenya. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 4(3), 89-102.
- Olaleye, F. O. (2018). *Teachers' Knowledge and Awareness of School Entry Age Policy in Oyo State, Nigeria*. Educational Press.

- Ongeri, S., & Ndung'u, J. (2020). *The impact of primary entry age on academic achievement in Kenyan public primary schools*. Kenya Education Research Institute.
- Oyekale, E. O. (2017). *Awareness and Compliance with School Entry Age Policy among Teachers in Osun State, Nigeria*. Rajpath Publisher.
- Pelletier, J. (2018). Canadian teachers' perspectives on school entry age policies. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 46(5), 509-517.
- Reynolds, A. J., & Ou, S. R. (2011). Early Childhood of Educational Policy: Relations between Pacific Context and Primary Grade Readiness and Progress. *American Educational Research Journal*, 48(3), 526-552.
- Smith, R., & Brown, L. (2018). The effect of primary entry age on mathematics achievement in public primary schools. *Educational Psychology Review*, 30(3), 345-366.
- Smith, R., Jones, J., & Anderson, K. (2015). Early primary school entry and child development in Canada. *Journal of Education and Human Development*, 4(4), 204-216.
- United Republic of Tanzania. *Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (2014). Education and Training Policy*. Dar es Salaam.
- United Republic of Tanzania. *Ministry of Education Science and Technology (2023). Education and Training Policy of 2014 version 2023*. Dodoma..
- University of Nairobi. (2018), "Improving Teacher Awareness of School Entry Age Policies in Kenya,"
- Wang, M. T. & Eccles, J. S. (2013). School context, achievement motivation, and academic engagement: A longitudinal study of school engagement using a multidimensional perspective. *Learning and instruction*, 28, 12-23. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.learninstruc.2013.04.002>
- Wang, X., & Li, H. (2015). Effects of entry age on cognitive abilities: A study based on Chinese primary school students. *International Journal of Psychology*, 50(3), 214-220.
- Wilson, K., & Brown, L. (2019). The Influence of Starting School Age on Academic Achievement: The Role of Immaturity among Younger Children. *British Educational Research Journal*, 45(5).