



INFLUENCE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES ON PUPILS' TRANSITION FROM PRESCHOOL TO PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN KAPCHEROP DIVISION, KENYA

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Abstract:

Transition from pre-school to primary is challenging for children in many countries across the world and Kenya specifically. However, it is a topic on which has received little attention in research. There are many issues which affect children. The purpose of this paper was to investigate the influence of school facilities on pupils' transition from preschool to primary school. The study used purposive, stratified and simple random samplings to select the respondents. The research tools included questionnaire that were administered to teachers and head teachers, interview schedule was used to solicit information from area education officials and observation schedule was used to verify the availability of learning resources and physical facilities in schools. The research found out that school facilities were inadequate while the available ones were in deplorable state and this affected learning in primary schools. The study concludes that availability of learning facilities at primary school significantly influence transition of pupils from pre-school to primary in Kapcherop division. The study recommends that all stakeholders; head teachers, PTA, parents, teachers, education officers should unite to address transition of pupils from pre-school to primary in the study area.

Keywords: transition, pupils, pre-schools, school facilities, grade 1

1. Introduction

Education is a fundamental human right because it empowers individuals with the knowledge and skills needed to increase production and income, as well as enabling individuals take advantage of employment opportunities in order to reduce poverty (UNESCO, 2010). This paper looks at how school facilities influence learners' transition from pre-schools to primary schools in one region of Kenya. Pre-primary school education appeared at beginning of 19th century as a result of private effort to supervise children of working families while mothers work in factories, while at school

children learnt some principles of hygiene and moral (Velena, 2015). Fredrick Froebel in German, Robert Own in United Kingdom and Maria Montessori in Italy are among of the people who had volunteered in influencing pre-primary education model in the world. In the second half of the 19th century several of countries launched the programme of pre-primary education programmes; France (1837), Spain (1857), Portugal (1930), German (1922), Italy (1923) and United Kingdom (1944-1947). But growth in Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE) is now a global trend as most countries (developed and developing) have embraced it in the formal education curriculum. Increases in enrolment of learners as a result of launch of ECDE programmes, were most pronounced in the regions that were also witnessing the strongest growth in primary education in developing countries in the following regions; sub-Saharan Africa (43.5%), Caribbean (43.0%) and South and West Asia (40.5%) as per UNESCO (2006).

Government throughout the world makes the emphasis on pre-primary education by developing its objectives. The objectives of the preschool relate across the countries as they are intending to prepare the child for the primary education and to build the sense of school to the child and to prepare the kids to master well the forthcoming education activities (Tombowua, 2013). However, statistics shows that most pre-school pupils find it difficult to adapt to the life in primary schools because they are not ready. This could be due to school readiness. According to Walker (1999), school readiness would be determined by: physical environment, quality of services, teachers' characteristics, learning/teaching aids, social emotional climate and learners' behaviour. Other variables include availability of the pre-schools, accessibility, quality and responsiveness to local needs and circumstances (Ngaruiya, 2006). This research paper looked at how the readiness of school facilities influenced transition of learners from pre-schools to grade one in Kenya. In many countries, research has shown that Grade 1 class sizes in particular have mushroomed reaching 100 or more children of widely varying ages and levels (Abadzi, 2006). Efforts to realize universal primary education have been marked progressively with the increasing access to primary schools and other levels of education; however pupil retention in primary schools remains a problem. Particularly in developing countries, this has resulted in a very challenging Grade 1 learning environment, with overcrowded classrooms, very high teacher-child ratios, lack of learning materials, lack of tables and chairs, and even lack of space to stand (Arnold *et al.*, 2008). Drop-out rates are highest in Grade 1 (UNESCO, 2007). High levels of drop-out are often combined with even worse repetition rates in most countries. A background paper by Arnold, Bartlett, Gowani and Merali (2006) for the 2007 EFAGMR looked at data from the 2006 EFA GMR (UNESCO, 2005). The data from Guinea-Bissau, Rwanda, Equatorial Guinea, Madagascar and Nepal showed that more than half the children who enrolled either repeated first grade or dropped out of school. For many of the countries for which dropout information was available by grade, Grade 1 dropout rates were at least double those in Grade 2. In South Asia, children were three times as likely to drop out of Grade 1 as compared to Grade 4. Even in Latin America where good progress toward the EFA goals had been made, there

were areas with poor outcomes. This shows that the attainment of EFA goals challenge is not experienced in Sub-Saharan African countries only. Transition from one level of education to another has been affected by various factors which include academic performance at the end of each grade, education level of parents, tuition fees charged by schools when joining grad 1, availability of vacancies in the next level, lack of instructional facilities and lack of infrastructural facilities to support learning (Muthuri, 2013). From the above information, the researcher focused on determining the influence of school facilities on pre-school children transition to primary schools in Kapcherop division. This involved participation of head teachers, teachers and education officers as respondents for the study.

2. Statement of the problem

There is a high dropout rate, repetition and absenteeism in lower primary school classes in Kenya (Wangechi, 2011). Lack of a smooth transition resulted to: high dropout, repetition and absenteeism rate in lower primary. In Kenya, Ngaruiya (2006) survey established that children were withdrawing back to pre-school where environment was relatively child friendly. For the transition to be smooth children need to be ready for school and, equally important, schools need to be ready for children (Myers, 1997). Thus, transition and readiness are closely related. Statistics from Divisional education office at Kapcherop indicates that pupils' transition to upper primary is low and this is occasioned by constant repetition and dropout rates. To improve transition from preschool to primary school, the paper investigates the influence of school facilities on learners' transition from pre to primary schools in Kapcherop division, Elgeyo-Marakwet County, Kenya.

3. Literature Review

3.1 Early Childhood Development Education in Kenya

Early childhood development and education is an important aspect towards economic and social development of the country, since at this level of education children has an opportunity to fairer and good start in life (UNESCO, 2005). The establishment of National Center for Early Childhood Education (NACECE) and District Centre for Early Childhood Education (DICECE) it was for the strategic move in the harmonization of the ECDE curricula and provision of training ECDE teachers and caregivers. NACECE under Kenya Institute of Education (KIE) has taken initiative in the production of national ECDE curriculum/guidelines, which are meant to be utilized and implemented in the ECDE centers in the country. However these guidelines are not readily accessible to teachers in some ECDE centers especially those in the small and remote rural communities. In this case some of these teachers and ECDE managers argue that this guidelines are a bit expensive thus unable to buy the guidelines (Abagi, 2008).

3.2 Transition of Pupils from Pre-Schools to Primary Schools

Educational transition refers to the process of change where children move from one place or phase of education to the next over time. This changes their relationships, teaching styles, the environment, time, space, context of learning and the learning itself. The change children experience can bring about excitement of these new beginnings, eagerness to meet new people and make friends and the opportunity to learn other new things. However, there can be some elements of uneasiness or the fear of unknown which can result to confusion and anxiety, this may have a great impact in the child in future and others may drop out of school as early as grade 1 or even during the lower classes (Fabian & Dunlop, 2005). The changes in the environment, curriculum, resources, institutional culture, style of classroom interactions and pedagogical approaches may have potential impact in the way children respond to the first transition to primary school state Shaeffer (2006) that starting school for children it means they learning social values and rules of the school, as well as getting along with the changes in roles, identity and relationships.

3.3 Empirical Studies

In Tanzania, Velena (2015) sought to examine factors influencing effective learning among pre-primary pupils in pre-primary school in Uyui district. The study was conducted using qualitative approach; however, some elements of quantitative were used especially in finding frequencies and percentage. The findings indicated that teachers had no enough qualification in teaching pre-primary pupils. The schools relayed on form four leavers and old teachers who were unable to implement effectively the preschool curriculum. This hindered the right of the preschool to learn. The findings further showed that there were deficit of teaching and learning materials which de-motivated pre-school pupils to learn effectively. Specifically, there were no play grounds that are very essential for the preschool learning. Lastly, it was found that there was poor parental involvement in academic progress of their pupils as the parents were occupied by the agricultural activities and the pressure of work. Wamaitha (2013) studied factors influencing learners' transition from Preschool to primary school in Thika-west District-Kiambu County. The data was collected through the use of descriptive survey design in Thika-West, Kiambu County; the target population of 234 included teachers of public primary schools with a preschool attached. The study established that teachers' level of training, physical environment, language of instruction and teaching methods were the major factors influencing learners' transition from pre-school to lower primary. It was found out that overpopulation in the classroom had a negative impact on learners' transition from pre-school to lower primary, whereby teachers with large class size recorded higher drop out cases compared to teachers with small class size. Muthuri (2015) study was on factors influencing transition of pupils' from primary to secondary schools in Meru central district in Kenya. The study used descriptive survey design because it administered questionnaires and interviewed people. It targeted 25 schools and 25 members of school committees in the district. The study concluded that the district was performing poorly

in KCPE, education level of parents was affecting transition, tuition fees was hindering students transition to secondary schools and limited vacancies in secondary schools was influencing transition of pupils from primary to secondary schools in the district. The review of the above studies fail to show how facilities provision influence transition of pupils from pre-schools to primary schools in Kapcherop division, a focus of this paper.

3.4 Materials and Methods

The study used a mixed methods approach incorporating qualitative and quantitative systems. A descriptive research design was used in this study. This study was carried out in Kapcherop division, Marakwet west District, ElgeyoMarakwet County of Rift Valley Province in Kenya. The target population for this study includes ECDE teachers and head teachers in 43 public primary schools in Kapcherop division. Purposive, stratified and simple random sampling procedures used in selecting the required sample for this study. The study used questionnaire for teachers, interview schedule for head teachers and officials from education office. Also, document analysis and observation was used to collect the data. The data were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0 Descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution were used to present data.

4. Results

A. On how unavailability of school facilities influenced transition of pre-school children to primary

Seven statements were constructed on a 5-point Likert scale (1-strongly disagree to 5-Strongly Agree) to seek teachers rating on how school facilities influenced transition. The results of the analysis are given in Table 1.

Table 1: ECDE teachers' responses on how unavailability of school facilities influenced transition of pre-school children to primary

Statement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Lack of adequate classrooms affects pre-school children transition to std one in my school(existence of shift classes)	43	4.3256	1.10671
Inadequacy of bookstore/library in my school affect pre-school children transition	43	4.0465	.95002
Lack of enough playing field(s) in my primary schools affect pre-school children transition	43	3.9767	1.35380
Inadequate desks, chairs and tables in my school affect pre-school children transition to primary in my school	43	3.9070	1.17136
Lack of enough compound affect pre-school children transition	43	3.7442	1.17702
Inadequate toilets/latrines in my school affect pre-school children transition to primary in my school	43	3.6047	1.36521
Lack of school kitchen in my school affect pre-school pupils transition in my school	43	3.5814	1.23890
Valid N (Listwise)	43	3.8837	1.1947

Results of the study reveal that majority of teachers ranked inadequacy of classrooms for learning ($M=4.32$ and $SD=1.10$) as a major factor impending pupils transition from pre-school to standard one in the area. The second factor was inadequacy of bookstore and library ($M=4.04$ and $SD=0.95$), lack of enough playing field ($M=3.97$ and $SD=1.35$), inadequate desks, chairs and tables ($M=3.90$ and $SD=1.17$). The respondents also tended to agree that lack of enough compound ($M=3.74$ and $SD=1.17$), inadequate toilets/latrines ($M=3.60$ and $SD=1.36$) and lack of school kitchen ($M=3.58$ and $SD=1.23$) as the school infrastructural facilities that affected transition of pupils from pre-school to primary schools in Kapcherop division. The study is in unison with Ngaruiya (2006) research results that showed that physical facilities were inadequate and inappropriate. Moreover, other factors mentioned by teachers related to school facilities are as presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Other school facilities influencing pre-school children transition to primary

Other facilities	Frequency	Percent
Lack of major learning materials (exercise books, pens, and school uniforms and playing materials)	24	55.8
Children are not given opportunities to play ,they are exposed to theory work throughout	9	20.9
lack of dining hall to be used by learners during lunch time and other facilities	3	7.0
lack of cooperation from parents and teachers in paying small school levies	3	7.0
Security- the school compound should be fenced properly. there should be a road sign that shows children crossing to avoid accident	2	4.7

Teachers indicate that lack of major learning materials (55.8%) and children not being given opportunities to play (20.9%) were some of the factors influencing their transition to primary schools in Kapcherop division.

B. Head teachers and Education Officers' Perceptions on how School Facilities Influence Transition of Pupils from Pre-school to Primary School

The study also sought head teachers and education officers' perceptions on the relationship between availability of school facilities and pre-school children transition to primary schools. Table 3 presents the findings.

Table 3: Head teachers' perceptions on how school facilities influence transition of pupils from pre-school to primary school

Other facilities	Frequency	Percent
Desks are few and children crowd on a desk therefore cannot write well, since they are uncomfortable they drop out of school	18	52.9
To some extend it does because when children are comfortable in school, they enjoy learning therefore they transit	16	47.1
Not really because we have enough of these facilities and still a big number do not transit	4	11.8

The head teachers gave mixed responses whereby 18 (52.9%) opined that in their schools, desks are few and children crowd on a desk and this inhibit them to write well

since they are uncomfortable. This may end up making a significant number of them to drop out of school while others repeat classes. Sixteen (47.1%) of head teachers, they agreed that the availability of facilities (desks, classrooms, toilets, playing fields) influence transition of pupils to some extent because when children are comfortable in schools, they enjoy learning therefore making an easy transition to upper classes. Contrary to the above assertion, 4 (11.8%) of head teachers opined that this is not really in their schools due to their unavailability and inadequacy and still a bigger number of pupils do not transit well to upper classes in their schools. On their part, one education officer remarked that:

“Availability and adequacy of these facilities makes pupils enjoy school and learning which makes them to excel and therefore transiting.”

The responses made by teachers, head teachers and education officers underscore the importance of provision of adequate school infrastructure to facilitate transition of pupils from pre-school to primary in Kapcherop division. According to one head teacher, it is the duty of the governments (national and county), board of management, parents and other stakeholders to help public primary schools upgrade their existing infrastructure while constructing new ones to improve transition rates.

C. Observation Checklists Results

The researcher conducted an observation of the availability and adequacy of several instructional resources from 34 primary schools in Kapcherop division. The results of the analysis are given in Table 4.

Table 4: Observation checklists results

Resource	Available		Not available		Comments
	f	%	f	%	
Classrooms	34	100.0	0	0.0	Few classrooms in 12 schools
Desks/chairs	34	100.0	0	0.0	Few desks/chairs in 28 schools
Course books	34	100.0	0	0.0	Inadequate course books in 18 schools
Toilets	34	100.0	0	0.0	Few toilets in 32 schools (consider separating boys & girls in different locations)
Offices such as staffroom and other offices	30	88.2	4	11.8	Should expand offices (10 schools)
Exercise books	24	70.6	10	29.4	Provide exercise books (10 schools) and Few exercise books (24 schools)
Kitchen	16	47.1	18	52.9	Build kitchen (20 schools) and 14 to expand their kitchens
Library/ bookstore	14	41.2	20	58.8	Building of library in 20 schools and 5 schools (of the remaining 14) to expand their library capacity
Facilities for play	10	29.4	24	70.6	Provide facilities for play (24 schools) and only 10 schools had balls
Storeroom	8	23.5	26	76.5	28 schools to build storerooms and 6 schools to expand their stores
Stationery- pens, pencils and rulers	6	17.6	28	82.4	Few stationery in 10 schools and provision of enough stationeries to 22 schools

Observation checklists results showed that 34 primary schools had classrooms, desks, chairs, course books and toilets. However, of the 34 schools, 12 schools were found to have fewer classrooms, 28 schools had fewer desks and chairs for pupils, 32 schools had fewer toilets while 18 schools were found to have inadequate course books for learning. Other facilities and resources that were lacking in less than half of the schools visited (34) were kitchens which were only available in 16 schools, library/bookstore in 14 schools, play facilities and gears in 10 schools, 8 schools had store room and only 6 schools were had adequate instructional resources for learning. This agrees with Wangechi (2011) observation checklist results that showed that 13(87%) of schools had instructional materials. Such materials were charts, chalk board, textbooks and story books. Only five (33%) class one teachers used instructional materials. However, of who used, they had instructional materials previously used by former standard one classes as they looked old, repaired and faded. In this study, the inadequacy of school facilities (infrastructure) and instructional resources affected transition of pupils to primary schools in Kapcherop division.

5. Conclusion

Document checklists results revealed that some school infrastructure like classrooms, chairs desks were inadequate thereby making the new school entrants to be uncomfortable. This in the long run increased their chances of dropping out of school. Computed average statistics showed that almost all teachers ($M=3.88$ and $SD=1.19$) tended to agree with the statement that school facilities influenced pre-school children transition to primary schools in the area. The study found out those school facilities was inadequate and this affected learners' adaptation. For instance, the pupils were used to play but in their current environment, the playing surface was inadequate together with playing kits. This made some of them to opt to repeat pre-school again. Although these children seemed to have obtained the necessary level of school readiness, they did not feel suitable for school. This spoiled their sense of well-being and hindered their engagement as active learners in the new environment and this (temporary) loss of competences might pave the way for poor self-esteem and insecurity in the new setting which resulted in repetition, dropout and absenteeism.

5.1 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made for policy and practical actions by stakeholders concerned. Therefore, schools should initiate programmes and initiatives aimed at mobilising resources for repair, maintenance and construction of new school facilities. This can be through seeking donor support, county government support, well-wishers, former pupils and parents to contribute funds towards expansion and modernisation of existing school infrastructure.

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