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THE EXTENT TO WHICH PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT INFLUENCES TRANSITION OF PUPILS FROM LOWER TO UPPER PRIMARY IN MANGA DISTRICT SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to find out the extent to which parental involvement influences transition of pupils from lower to upper primary in Manga district schools in Nyamira County, Kenya. The objective of the study was to find out whether parental involvement activities influenced transition of pupils from lower to upper primary. Survey design was used for the study. The study population comprised of 19880 pupils, 590 teachers, 57 School Management Committee members, 57 and Head teachers. All the six Quality Assurance Officers were interviewed. The research instruments were the questionnaires which were filled by pupils and teachers, interview schedule for head teachers, SMC members and Education Officers. Piloting, involving two schools in the district was carried out and used test re-test technique to ascertain its reliability. The researcher visited all sampled schools and educational offices to collect data. Sampled teachers and pupils were given questionnaires to fill and head teachers and officers were interviewed by the researcher. Data was analyzed using statistical methods for analyzing and quantifying data. Statistical values in tables were used to compare the calculated value with tabulated value. It was observed that there was a strong correlation between parental involvement in school activities and performance of their children which in turn influenced their transition from one level to another. The study recommended that parents should involve themselves in school activities as it motivates their performance and enabled them to transit from one learning level to another.

Keywords: Parental involvement, Performance, Transition, Learning activities, Lower primary, Upper primary, Learning environment.

Contribution/ Originality

The paper's primary contribution is finding that parental involvement in learner's educational activities, encourage and motivate them to perform well. This influences their transition from one level of learning to the next.

1. INTRODUCTION

Children's acquisition of educational knowledge and skills is not a one party activity but rather a shared responsibility of different parties each performing various roles for the benefit of the learner at any level and throughout all levels of learning in any educational institution. As Johnson (2003) notes that the parents and families of learners are to be fully involved in the learning at home of their children by providing support, encouraging and demanding ongoing learning at home through: homework, household tasks and responsibilities,

learning tasks (such as reading, talking, assignments, language and communication), interactions with others, active involvement in the family community, and school such as church, shopping, vacation, family outing. According to Johnson, parents and the family members share a similar role of ensuring that the learner is assisted to continue performing learning activities even at home.

Kundu and Bose (1986) said that the child's language development was influenced to a great extent by his home environment. The child hailing from a lower socio-economic background will be restricted in the use of language. This might be because the child does not spend adequate time with their parents. The child was also restricted in their social contacts. Parents should provide a safe and healthful learning environment with supervision and guidance as well as proper discipline. This involved helping the children become confident inside and outside the home. It was the parents' responsibility to instill a positive attitude and respect for school and learning. Ways to help parents included providing educational training, creating programs to help with nutritional awareness and having school officials make home visits during transitional times, such as when the children are moving from preschool to elementary school.

Parents should work with the community to boost the learning possibilities of the children. Some examples of community involvement included businesses, service organizations, faith groups and government agencies. Integration of all resources was to enhance the children's education and give the community more of a sense of participation. Tassoni (2006) suggested that key components of an effective physical learning environment where: outdoor area, safety, security, hygiene, furniture and equipment, toys and materials, decoration and role play; layout and ventilation. Tassoni (2006) implies that the physical learning environment was useful for any meaningful teaching / learning activities to take place. There should be enough outdoor area (field) for learners to carry out re-creation activities such as games and sports. The physical environment should be safe, secure and in good hygiene conditions. The size of furniture and equipment should be relevant to the age and size of learners.

The parents and families of learners were to be fully involved in the learning at home to their children by providing support, encouraging and demanding ongoing learning at home through: homework, household tasks and responsibilities, learning tasks (such as reading, talking, assignments, language and communication), interactions with others, active involvement in the family community, and school such as church, shopping, vacation, family outing, Johnson (2003). Johnson was here saying that parents and other family members should also play their role to motivate the learners when at home and that may be done by making sure that the learner complete his/her assignments in time. Tassoni (2006) implied that the good performance of the learners were co-operate activity between the parent and the teacher. Transition at various levels of learning were out of high educational outcomes that had been achieved through efforts inculcated by learners, parents, teachers and all those interested in education, including the government. As Margetts (2000) noted that transition programs should be based on a philosophy that children's adjustment to school was easy when children were familiar with the situations, parents were informed about the new school and teachers had information about children's development and previous experiences. Certain continuities were to be aimed at, such as continuity of peers, of expectations between settings (including teacher and child behaviors), of programming for children's learning. A good programmed learning activity would provide for transition and encourage learners' through all learning levels. This was likely to enhance transition from lower to upper primary. Having done all these there was still minimal success regarding transition of learners from lower to upper primary for a few learners. A study was required to be carried out to decline this problem.

2. HYPOTHESIS

There was no significant relationship between parental involvement activities and pupils transition rates from lower to upper primary in Manga district primary schools.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design used in this study was descriptive survey. Kerlinger (1986) defines research designs as a plan, structure or strategy of investigation so conceived as to obtain answers to research questions or problems. Orodho (2005) further notes that this design gathers data at a particular point in time with the intention of describing the nature of the existing conditions, identifying the standards against which existing conditions can be compared and determining the relationship that exists between specific events. Descriptive survey design was considered suitable in this study since the population studied was too large to be observed directly. The central feature of descriptive survey is the systematic collection of data in standardized form from an identifiable population or representative sample.

4. SAMPLING PROCEDURES

Sampling procedure may be defined as a definite plan for obtaining a sample from a given population (Orodho, 2009). Sample size selection was done in accordance with Krejcie and Morgan (1970) matrix, a statistical calculation for arriving at the approximate sample size using the formula given below:

$$n = (\chi 2 Npq) / (d^2 (N\text{-}1) + \chi 2 pq)$$

Where n= desired sample size   N= Target population   p=population proportion of 0.5

q = 1-p for a binomial distribution

d= degree of accuracy reflected by the amount of error that can be tolerated in fluctuation of a

size about the population and corresponds to the significance level with a standard error of the proportion at the corresponding confidence level of 0.05.

$\chi 2$ = the Chi square value for one degree of freedom relative to the desired level of confidence ($\chi 2$=3.841 at 95% confidence level).The sample size below is derived from the sample size matrix developed by Krejcie and Morgan (1970).

Table-1. Sample size against target population

	Population size N	Sample size S
Teachers	569	230
Pupils	20,434	377
Head teachers	80	68
Total	21,088	675

In this study, the primary schools were stratified into three educational divisions from which proportionate random sampling was used to select 68 schools to participate in this study. Simple random sampling was used to select the schools from each division and the researcher considered this to be representative sample because the sample size was large enough contain all the variation in the population and equal and independence chance was given to each individual in the population to be selected. Hence, 22 schools were selected from Manga division and 23 schools from each of the other two divisions. All the 68 head teachers of the selected schools automatically qualified to participate in this study. Simple random sampling was used to select 76 teachers from each selected primary schools in Manga Division while 77 teachers were selected from the other two divisions.

Table-2. Show sampling of respondents for the study

Division	Total number of schools	No. of schools selected	No. of pupils	No. of teachers	No. of head teachers
Manga	26	22	125	189	76
Kemera	27	23	126	190	77
Magombo	27	23	126	190	77
Total	80	68	377	569	230

Source: MOE - Manga District

Simple random sampling was used to select 125 pupils from Manga Division whereas 126 pupils from the remaining two other divisions. The quality assurance and standards officers were purposively included in this study. Therefore the study sample comprised of 68 head teachers, 230 teachers, 377 pupils and 5 QASOs. This was shown in Table 2 above.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This sub-section consists of responses of pupils who were involved in the study. The pupils responded to a number of issues in assessing parental involvement to boost transition from one level to another.

		Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	253	37.5	37.5
	Agree	169	25.0	62.5
	Disagree	169	25.0	87.5
	Strongly Degree	84	12.5	100.0
	Total	675	100.0	

In establishing the effect of parents in participating in school related activities such as accompanying their children to school, respondents (pupils) were asked to say how they felt when escorted to school and their responses were as in figure 4.1
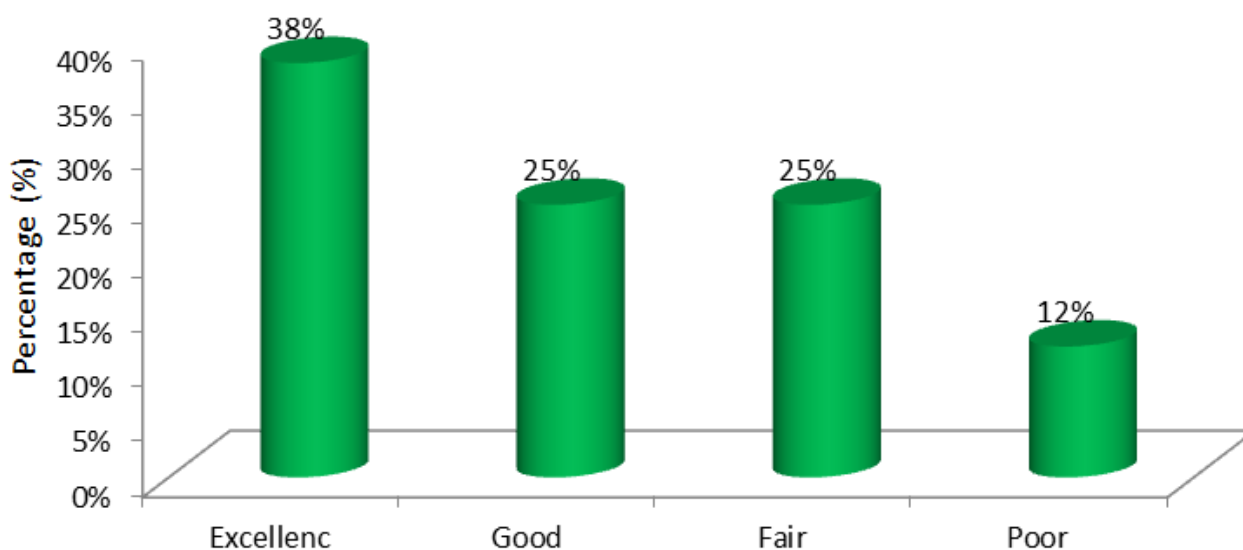

Figure-4.1. Show how pupils feel when escorted to school by parents

The study found out of 88% of the respondents said they felt happy when escorted to school. In fact, those who said it was excellent 38%, good 25%, and fair 25% hence totaling to 88% while those who did not like to be escorted were 12%.The study noted that those who were not escorted to school consisted of 56% were not happy and only 44% who had no problem going to school without being escorted. However, the respondents noted that when the pupils were in class three, 81% were willing and happy to go alone to school while 19% felt the need to be escorted to school.

Langeveld (1979) describes education as "a form of social intercourse or association between adults and children, aiming at influencing the child to come of age. Leinhardt (1989) and Westermann (1991) point out that teachers use knowledge about their children in classrooms – their backgrounds, strengths, and weaknesses to create lessons that connect new subject matter to pupils' experiences. This means that the teachers must have an

understanding of the content to be able to guide the learner through. Teachers use this knowledge to adapt their teaching to accommodate pupils who learn in different.

The results presented above show how important it was for parents to associate themselves with their children's learning activities. Escorting the learner to school, attending to school meetings and other learning related activities encourages and motivates the learner to be more serious with his or her learning activities. It also assures the learner that schooling is a worthy course.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In establishing the relationship between parent involvement in school related activities and pupil transition from one level to another, the study observed there was a strong relationship between the two. Parents or guardians and teachers should engage learners in more learning activities because they enhance pupils' readiness to transit from one class / level to another. The schools should identify chores and alert the parents to volunteer to offer such services for improving pupils' performance and transition from one level to another.

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