

**SELECTED PARENTAL FACTORS INFLUENCING
LEARNERS' TRANSITION FROM HOME TO PUBLIC
PRESCHOOLS OF NYABONDO ZONE NYAKACH SUB-
COUNTY- KISUMU-KENYA**

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Abstract

The study investigated the selected parental factors influencing learners Transition from Home to Public Preschools of Nyabondo Zone, Nyakach Sub-county-Kisumu-Kenya. The research was informed by Social Cultural Theory of Vigotsky supported by ecological theory of Bronfenbrenner. This study adopted a sequential explanatory design with which both Quantitative and Qualitative approach were adopted. The study population constituted 400 baby class children, 20 head teachers, 20 preschool teachers from public preschools; picked out through simple random and saturated sampling respectively. The research instruments that were used parents' interviews and both head teachers and preschool teachers Questioning. The validity of the research instruments was ensured through expert judgments by university lectures in the department of Education. To test the reliability of the instruments, the researcher employed the test-retest and correlation coefficient of 0.622 was reported. The Pearson correlation test established a strong positive of 0.763 influences on the two variables. The study recommended that their parents should come up with devices to ease separation anxiety by making some children of the school going age have basic self-care skills to smoothen transition from Home to preschool.

Keywords: Parental Factors, learners transition, Home Preschool, Nyabondo zone

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Introduction:

To investigate the early years of the child is very important for future success in life. This calls for creating a child friendly environment for the child's holistic growth and development. This study focused particularly on home and school as a child rearing institutions with concern on transition between these institutions. According to United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organizations UNESCO (2010), education is the most basic insurance against poverty and education empowers people with knowledge, skills and confidence they need to shape their future. Educations of the pre-schoolers begin at home immediately the child is born. The caregivers at home are mandated with creating learning environment free of any barriers. This should be done with understanding that this is a developmental right of the child hence caregivers are obligated to providing education to the child both at home and at school. The child then moves to pre-school which is totally different environment. This child is expected to socialize as learning continues. This calls for smooth transition to enhance socialization, adaptation and learning.

Fabian and Dunlop's (2007) study in Europe, defined education transition as a process of change that children experience from one place or phase of education to another, and some study from Germany by Griebel and Niesel (2006) indicate that the start of school for children is a transition in which there is a change of identity within each family. While parents and teachers both offer children support during the transition to school; they may have different expectations of the process which are communicated to the children both verbally and none verbally. In order to clarify expectations, the caregivers (parents) need to prepare children for school by constructing the transition. The caregivers need to talk to children about learning in pre-schools, what happens at pre-schools, to prepare children to cope with aspects of school and negotiate their identity. Communication is clearly one key to successful transition. Based on the study, it is imperative that the caregivers prepare children before they join school. Permissiveness on this might interfere with child's adjustment to the new learning environment (pre-school).

In 1852 Friedrich Froebel from Germany submitted a detailed plan for the organic linking of home with pre-school education; thus laying the ground work for a systematic discussion of issue of discontinuity and how to bridge the existing gap in the transition from one level to another (Grossmann, 1987). In Europe, the question of children's smooth transition from home to school

was directly linked with the demand for achieving a uniform curriculum involving kindergarten, primary school, and gymnasium. Theoretically there is no uniform coherent theory for an overall understanding of the issue of transition that would be adequate for explaining the entire range of developmental challenges as well as problems brought by the transition from home to pre-school.

A study conducted by Mwirichia (2013) on parental involvement and perceptions of their role in early childhood development education pedagogy in Kenya revealed that parents held positive attitude and were involved at curriculum implementation level when they paid fees, provided teaching and learning materials, interacted with teachers, supported children with homework and assisted with child discipline at school. Quite a number of studies have indicated that there is a close relationship between the parental level of education and participation by their children. The World (1995) noted that literate parents are more likely than illiterate ones to enrol and retain their children in schools hence region with highest proportions of illiterate adults have fewer chances of supporting the education progress of their children. According to Osei-Akoto et al (2012) better educated parents appreciate the value of education more than illiterate ones and normally assist their children to progress in education both morally and materially. These findings have a direct link with the current study which considers the parent's level of education a social factor that might affect the transition rate of children from home to preschool.

A study conducted in Mombasa by Ogoye (2007), showed that illiterate parents were unable to assist their children in their homework. The importance of involvement in children's academic success is an unquestionable assumption independent of the parent's type of involvement in education or schooling, in general, hundreds of studies have demonstrated a predominance of positive co-relations between this variable and children academic achievements. Parents' education level has direct impact on their children's education aspirations (Okantey, 2008). Children's schooling is positively related to their parents because they tend to imitate their parents and also aspire to be highly educated as their parents. Children are more disadvantaged when their parents have low education level; forming a circle of uneducated family members and making every generation of the family not to go higher than their parents. Children from higher educated families are more ambitious, attain higher levels of education and finally see going to school for the first time as a bridge to a brighter future and not a refuge when parents are busy.

Research Methodology

The study used sequential explanatory research design employing mixed methods which involved collecting and analysing Quantitative data and then Qualitative data (Creswell, 2006) sequential research design is used in this design because there were already parental factors affecting transition of children from home to preschool, the curriculum support officer (CSO) results were used. The 400 parents, 20 head teachers and 20 preschools in Nyakach Sub-County Nyabondo Zone were targeted as informants in this study. The sample constituted of 40 parents, 20 head teachers and 20 preschool teachers chosen through sample random and saturated sampling respectively. The questionnaires adopted the Likert Scale method whereby respondents had to respond to every statement using a structured format: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (UD), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD). Expert advice was sought from the supervisors and other lecturers in the Department of Education who examined the items of the instrument of the Questionnaires indicate reliability co-efficient of (0.763). Thereafter, a correlation was determined between parental factors and transition to preschool. Hypotheses ($P=0.05$) for example when the p-value hypothesis was rejected but when the p-value obtained was greater than 0.05 then the null hypothesis was accepted

Findings and Discussion

The study established the parental factors affecting learners' transition to public preschool of Nyabondo Zone Nyakach Sub- County. To address this research only one objective was investigated. To determine how parental involvement influenced transition of children from home to preschool in Nyabondo Zone, Nyakach Sub-County. One Questionnaire was carefully developed to measure if there is any significant influence of parental involvement on transition of children from home to preschool. Addressing this objective, the null hypothesis, "there is no significant influence of parental involvement on transition of children from home to preschool in Nyabondo Zone, Nyakach Sub- County" was tested. To do this a correlation analysis was conducted. The set scores on the parental involvement were used as the independent variable while scores of transition to preschool was used as the explanatory variable (dependent variable).

On the level of parental involvement during transition to preschool, the researcher designed a Questionnaire to collect views of the informants on the same. The items in the Questionnaire

were related to perceptions which were linked to actions influence of parental involvement during transition during transition to preschool. The head teachers' and teachers' respondents were presented with statements that Likert scaled. The respondents were to choose from 5- points score Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (UD), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD). The respondents were asked to score on each statement based on their perception on the statement in regard to transition to preschool. The researcher computed the percentage so frequencies of the responses from the head teacher and preschool teachers and was tabulated as shown in the table 1 while the results of the correlation are represented in table 2.

Table 1: Statements Related to Parental involvement and Transition to preschools

Statement	SA	A	UD	D	SD
Proper communication with school will help in transition	27(67.5%)	9(22.5%)	2(5.0%)	1(2.5%)	1(2.5%)
Proper parenting by establishing enabling home environments that supports children would enhance transition	31(77.5%)	5(12.5%)	3(7.5%)	0(0.0%)	1(2.5%)
Provision of play materials at school and at home by parents promote skill development	33(82.5%)	5(12.5%)	2(5.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)
Talk about school with children frequently promotes positive attitude towards transition	30(75.0%)	9(22.5%)	1(2.5%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)

Source: Researcher's Data 2016

Table: 2: Correlations Between Parental level of Education and Preschool Transition

		Parental Level of Education	Preschool Transition
Parental Level of Education	Pearson Correlation	1	.763**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	40	40
Preschool Transition	Pearson Correlation	.763**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	40	40

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Researcher's Data, 2016

Table 1 indicates that 67.5% strongly agreed that proper communication with school will help in transition, 22.5 % agreed, 5.0 % were undecided while 2.5% disagreed with the statement, an equivalent number also strongly disagreed with the statement. This shows that cumulatively over two thirds of the respondents at 90% agreed that proper communication with school would help in transition, 5.0% were undecided while only 5% cumulatively refuted the statement. Thus majority of respondents agreed that proper communication with school helped in children's smooth transition to preschool. From the interview conducted to parents, majority of them agreed that proper communication with school helped in transition. My findings were that majority of parents agreed that proper communication with school help in transition as teachers are informed of children's problem. This is what one of the respondents had to say;

Most of we parent find it difficult to visit schools where our children learn because of fear of being asked for school fee and not being identified with our children (parent 4)

The researcher strongly agreed with the respondents' decision on proper communication with the school helps in smooth transition from home to preschool as children will feel that school is not just a place for them only but their parents too. The findings were supported by that of Masood et al., (2014) in a study that established that the most significant driver of parental involvement is parents speaking with teachers on a regular basis. This implies that good parent-teacher relationship that is boosted through communication is very crucial for transition of the learners from home to preschools.

The findings on Table 1 further indicate that 77.5% of the teachers strongly agreed with the statement that proper parenting by establishing enabling home environments that supports children would enhance transition, 12.5% agreed with the statement, 7.5% were undecided while no teacher disagreed, 2.5% strongly disagreed with the statement. This shows that cumulatively, majority of the respondents at 90.0% agreed that proper parenting by establishing enabling home environments that supports children would enhance transition, 7.5% were undecided while 2.5% cumulatively refuted the statement. Thus majority of respondents agreed with the statement that

proper parenting by establishing an enabling home environment that supports children would enhance transition to preschool. From the interviews it was evidenced that proper parenting by establishing enabling home environment would enhance transition to pre-school thus parents should provide rich home environment so that children do not meet play materials for the first time in schools. On provision of adequate basic needs, when asked to comment on this, parents 8 had to say;

“As parents we try our best to provide play materials to our children, but they are very expensive” (parent 8)

Parents should try to create a home environment which is almost the same with the school environment so that children do not find schools a strange place but where they socialize through play just as at home. Parents too should be polite and loving to their children just as justified by the findings conducted by Rudasill, Adelson, Callahan, Houlihan and Keizer (2013) who found out that authoritative parenting promotes positive outcome for children particularly those who have been identified as gifted.

It is clear in table 1 that 82.5% of the teachers strongly agreed that provision of play materials at school and home by parents promotes skills development, 12.5% agreed with the statement as 5.0% were undecided with no respondent either disagreed or strongly agreed with the statement. Majority of the respondents at 95.0% agreed that provision of play materials at school and home by parents promotes skills development, 5.0% were undecided with no respondent refuting the statement. Thus it is very clear that provision of play materials at school and at home promotes positive skills development during transition to preschool. From the interview on parental involvement during transition, it was seen that provision of play materials at home by parents promoted skill development thus children learned best through play in interview with the parent; one of them had to say this;

As parents we know how important play materials are to our young ones but we cannot provide them due to lack of funds. Most of us do not have time to make our children play materials with locally available materials (parent2)

Friedrick Froebel 1852 once said that denying children play is like denying them food. Children should therefore be provided with enough play materials both at home and at school so that they do not notice much difference between school and home. The finding is supported by a study conducted by Manasi, Ndiku, Sang and Ejakait (2014) in Teso North Sub-county which indicated that there was low parental involvement in provision of teaching and learning resources. Nakpodia and Achugbue (2012) further supported the finding by recommending that parents should cooperate with administrators to take care of their children and help in providing adequate materials for the children. This implies that with adequate provision of play materials which is a category of teaching and learning resources, skills development that is hoped to result into smooth transition will be realized.

Table 1 further indicates that 75.0% of the teachers strongly agreed that talk about school with children frequently promotes positive attitude towards learning, 22.5% agreed with the statement as 2.5% were undecided while no teacher either disagreed or strongly agreed with the statement. Cumulatively, over three quarters of the respondents at 97.5% agreed that talk about school with children frequently promotes positive attitude towards learning, 2.5% were undecided with no respondent refuting the statement. Thus majority of respondents agreed that talking about school with children frequently promotes positive attitude towards transition. This is what one of the parents said;

“It is true talking about school with the children frequently promotes positive attitude towards transition as children will not find school environment strange but a place family member always talks about and even stroll to in the evening. Talk about people found at school and how friendly they are” (parent 7).

It is therefore clear that talk about school with children frequently promotes positive attitude towards transition to preschool. Merlo, Bowman and Barnet (2007) supported the finding by indicating that caregivers’ nurturance is an important ingredient in the recipe of transition to preschool.

During the interview session with the parents, it was found that the level of parental involvement through different activities such as provision of basic needs good communication with the teachers and adequate provision of learning materials were also found to influence the preschool transition. For instance, one of the parents offered that;

“Good communication and good rapport between the parent and the teachers creates a good atmosphere for learners to get used to the new school environment. Parents who visit their children’s schools for a one on one talk with the teacher on education welfare of their children are able to identify the weak areas in parental upbringing and make adjustment for good transition thus children develop the feeling that school is not only a place for them but for parents too”
[parent, 3]

On provision of adequate basic needs, when asked to comment on this, one of the parents had this to say;

“Parents whose children access adequate food, clothes and good shelter are very confident and participate actively in class; they therefore perform higher than their counterparts as they hardly fall sick.” [Parent, 5].

Another parent had this to say;

“Learners with adequate basic needs particularly food, are very active in class and participate fully in the class activities. Such learners will always transit to preschool smoothly so long as mum’s promise of keeping food is kept. Thus they get on well with others at school compared to those who do not get adequate basic needs. A hungry learner is always weak, and has poor health” [parent 6].

The statements expressions of parent 3, 5 and 8 indicated that parental involvement in the life of the child on education issues had great influence on the preschool transition. Similarly, Castro, Expósito, Lopez-Martin, and Gaviria, (2015) in the United Kingdom (UK) conducted a study on

parental involvement on student academic achievement and smooth transition, used a quantitative synthesis of research. The results show that the parental models most linked to high achievements of children learning activities are found when the families have high academic expectations for their children, develop and maintain communication with them about school activities up to transition from pre-school to kindergarten and even help them develop reading habits even before they start going to baby class by creating a conducive environment. Moreover, Manasi, Ndiku, Sang and Ejakait (2014) in a study conducted in Teso North Sub County, sought to find out the influence of parental involvement in provision of teaching and learning materials on educational outcomes. The study revealed that there was low parental involvement in provision of teaching and learning resources and this could as well interfere with the education performance of the learners and thereby make children develop negative attitude towards school if there are no play materials.

Hypothesis Testing:

A hypothesis was tested to ascertain the influence of parental involvement on transition to pre-school.

Ho1, there is no significant influence of parental involvement on transition from home to pre-school.

The null hypothesis was rejected if the p-value obtained was less than 0.05, but the null hypothesis was accepted when the p-value obtained was greater than 0.05.

The study also used Bivariate Pearson correlation moment to establish the relationship between level of parental involvement and transition to preschools by the learner. The researcher established whether there was any significant relationship between the two scores parental involvement (independent variable) and transition to preschools (explanatory variable). The output of results is presented in Table 2:

The analysis revealed that there was significant positive ($n = 40$; $r = .622$; $p < 0.05$) relationship between level of parental involvement and transition to preschools by the learners. This implies that the more parents were involved in the education welfare of the child, the more likely the child would transit aptly to preschools. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative one accepted. This finding is in line with a survey in South Africa by Kay (2013) on tran-

sition of children from pre-schools and home context grade 1 in township primary schools which investigated understandings and stakeholder's involvement in primary schools. The study found that parents who were highly involved in their children transition and education were better advocates for their children and equally a quality home environment and parental support can contribute towards their children motivation for academic achievement and learning.

Conclusion

Conclusions drawn from the first study objective were that parental involvement was generally a salient contributor to learners' transition from home to preschool and ultimately academic achievement. This was because the study findings revealed a significant positive relationship between parents' involvement and children's transition from home to preschool. Parental involvement was measured in different parameters such as level of communication with the child and provision of conducive environment for learning. Bivariate Pearson correlation moment also shows that there was significant positive ($n = 40$; $r = .622$; $p < 0.05$) influence of level of parental involvement on transition to preschools by the learners. Parents need to be sensitized on the importance of regular visits to preschools, importance of providing instructional resources, provision of quality care to the child and establishing a conducive environment that would result into smooth transition from home to preschool. This should be done by teachers, School, Board of Managements and developmental partners. The action should be immediate

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