

ASSESSMENT OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SCHOOL
ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSITION OF CHILDREN FROM
PRESCHOOL TO CLASS ONE IN THIKA
WEST SUB-COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Transition of children from preschools to class one has been low and has been a concern to many education stakeholders. Thus, the study intended to assess the contributions of school environment on transition of children from preschool to class one in Thika West Sub-county, Kenya. The literature review was based on the concept of preschool transition, teachers' preparedness, school facilities, play materials and instructional resources in relation to transition of children from preschool to class one. The study adopted qualitative and quantitative methodology. The study applied concurrent triangulation research design which enabled the researcher to use the quantitative and qualitative methods during the same timeframe and with equal weight. Questionnaires and observation checklists were used to collect data from preschool managers and teachers and preschool children respectively. Pilot survey was conducted twice amongst 5 preschool managers, 5 preschool teachers and 10 preschool children to establish validity and reliability was determined using Cronbach's Alpha Method. Target population comprised 40 preschool managers, 80 preschool teachers and 1700 preschool children all totaling to 1820. Using The Central Limit Theorem of sample size determination, a sample of 8 preschools, that is, 20% of the targeted 40 preschools, was selected. Based on the same theorem, the researcher sampled 200 respondents, that is, 11% of 1820. The researcher then applied stratified sampling to create 5 strata each consisting of 8 preschools. From each stratum, 1 preschool manager, 2 preschool teachers were nominated using purposive sampling considering preschools which have registered low transition rates. Approximately 38 preschool children were selected using simple random sampling. This sampling procedure enabled the researcher to realize a sample of 5 preschool head teachers, 9 preschool teachers and 186 preschool children. The separately, but concurrently, collected data was analyzed inferentially using quantitatively and qualitatively and then merged into one overall interpretation in which the researcher related the quantitative results to the descriptive statistics and thematic analysis. Frequency counts of the responses then obtained to generate information about the respondents and to illustrate the general trend of findings on the various variables that were under investigation. Quantitative data was analyzed using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) Test Analysis in Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS). PPMC was suitable since it established relationships between variables. The findings of the study were presented using tables. The study has established that school environment dynamics such as teacher preparedness, school facilities, play materials and instructional resources are important in enhancing transition of preschool children from preschools to class one. It thus recommends that regulations should be formulated to enforce adherence to Basic Education Act, 2013 and Children's Act 2003 which spell guidelines conducive school environment which guarantee safety and comfort for preschool children.