IMPACT ON LOWER PRIMARY EDUCATION BY THE CHALLENGES OF DISTANCE TO THE PRE-SCHOOL CENTRES IN MUKOGODO DIVISION, LAIKIPIA COUNTY, KENYA

EDITH NJERI WANGOMBE

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DECLARATION

I declare that this research project is my original work and has not been presented in any other university/institution for consideration. This research project has been completed by referenced sources duly acknowledged. Where texts, data, graphics, pictures or tables have been borrowed from other sources including internet, these have been specifically accredited and references cited in accordance with anti-plagiarism regulations.

Signature  -------------------------------  Date  -------------------------------

EDITH NJERI WANG'OMBE
E55/PT/NKI/23863/12

This research project has been submitted for appraisal with our approval as university supervisors

Signature  -------------------------------  Date  -------------------------------

DR. RACHEL W. KAMAU- KANG’ETHE
Department of Early Childhood Studies,
Kenyatta University.

Signature  -------------------------------  Date  -------------------------------

DR. CATHERINE GAKII MURUNGI
Department of Early Childhood Studies,
Kenyatta University.
DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my family for their understanding, inspiration and support throughout the study period. I treasure you.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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<td>Early Childhood Development</td>
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<td>ECCE</td>
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<td>EFA</td>
<td>Education For All</td>
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<td>GMR</td>
<td>Global Monitoring Report</td>
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<td>SPSS</td>
<td>Statistical Package for Social Sciences</td>
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ABSTRACT

The government of Kenya since independence has had many commissions in place which have helped review Kenyan system of education so as to make sure it is in line with the national requirements of human capital and also national educational goals and objectives. The legal provision and policy documents of Kenya support the education of the minority and the marginalized children. It is within the country’s legal framework and policy to provide quality education to all irrespective of cultural, religion and economic disparities. There should be enough schools and of good quality in the whole country. Currently with devolved government, the counties are supposed to look into the development of Early Childhood Development in their respective counties. It will not just be enough to construct ECD centers but there is need to check who these centers are serving and how far these children are coming from so as to cater for all children without discrimination, thus the study sought to investigate the impact on lower primary education by the challenges of distance to the pre-school centres in Mukogodo division, Laikipia county. The purpose of this research was to investigate the effect of long distance from home to pre-school on preschool and lower primary academic performance of the children of the pastoralist community in Mukogodo division Laikipia County Kenya. The research was to find out how long distance to pre-school centers affects pre-school attendance, pre-school entry age, enrolment and eventually academic performance at lower primary school level. The study was guided by justice and fairness theory which advocates for principles of justice to guide modern social order by John Rawl (1971). The researcher used questionnaires as research instruments which were filled by pre-school teachers and class teachers of lower primary and also had an interview schedule for ECD sub county officer. The researcher employed the descriptive survey research design due its appropriateness for educational research. The records on academic performance of the pupils to establish their academic performance and also the pre-school attendance register were checked. The target population was pre-school teachers, pre-school children, lower primary school and pre-school class teachers and ECD Sub-county officer. The schools were 17 in total. The study sampled 7 pre schools and 7 public primary schools. The sample size was 47.05% of the total population. The results were coded and entered into the computer and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) where frequencies, percentages, and means were computed and presented using graphs and tables. The results were used to come up with recommendations that would help improve academic performance in this region. The study findings were; long distance form home to school affected enrolment of children to pre-schools. It also affects the age entry of the pupils in pre-school. Attendance of the children in school is poor due to long distance from home hence poor performance in school. The study concluded that long distances affects the performance of the pupils in early primary school, it affects the attendance and age entry of the pupils in pre-schools. The study recommends that all stakeholders should put in place to critically address challenges related to issues of access, equity, quality and relevance of ECDE programs and also mitigate against the challenges that affect the learning programs due to long distance.
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

1.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the background of the study, research problem, purpose of the study, objectives, limitations and delimitations, assumptions, theoretical framework and conceptual framework.

1.1 Background of the Study

Learning is a dynamic process and its outcome is more evident when it begins early in life and continues through adulthood (Heckman, 2000 pg 50). The learning environment should be good with enough and safe physical space. It should also begin at an appropriate starting age. Long distance has been a great hindrance to achieve this. To curb this problem many communities lives in dispersed villages, the ECD centers are build in search a way that they serve a number of villages.

A recent study conducted by Germany-based Education International showed that long journeys to school have a negative impact on students’ health and on their education achievement levels (Tumwebaze, 2016). Schools of any type must be easily accessible – this is particularly valid for elementary schools. For health consideration, the slogan, ‘Short legs – short distance’ must not be valid only for elementary schools. It must lead to all schools being kept close to students’ homes. Only this way will it be guaranteed that children are not exposed to the stress and dangers of long journeys to school.

In Mexico, Coady and Parker (2002) studied factor influencing academic performance as being the distance from school, long distance is a reason for lateness. In Brazil the school
day run from 7 a.m to noon and student typically go home at noon to share lunch with their family hence many school can barely afford to complete the syllabus with scarce facilities like computers hence weak performance in National exams Cohen (2004).

Broadly speaking, in Nigeria school attendance levels are lower for girls than for boys, (NPC and RTI International 2011). According to the 2010 NEDS the main reason that parents and guardians gave for their primary-aged children having never attended school was the distance to school. Several studies have carried out statistical analyses of school attendance based on household survey data. Kazeem et., al. (2010) estimated a model of school attendance based on household characteristics taken from 2004 NDHS data, controlling for various demographic aspects such as wealth and location. They found that distance to the nearest school were the most important determinants of child school attendance.

Musisi et al (2003) argues that commuting to and from school led to lowering of morale among pupils in primary schools in Uganda. Low morale would have been a result of waking up very early but arriving at school late, which in turn influenced students’ academic performance negatively. According to Ibrahim et al (2008), pupils’ dropout rate is determined by an increase in distance from school to home. Therefore the further it is, the higher the chances of dropping out.

Jagero et al (2010) asserts that girls who stayed near schools performed better than those who came from far. To them the reason was that they would regularly miss lessons and be punished for that. According to Mutai (2010), long distances led to lateness to school besides making pupils getting exhausted which in turn affected their rate of concentration
in class. It has been observed that rural schools face challenges relating to isolation, poverty and limited job opportunities for school leavers. Isolation denies rural schools the advantages of urban based resources for instance library, electricity, technology which might enhance learning gains (Capper, 1993). Bickel and Lange (1995) noted that because of limited employment opportunities, learners in rural areas do see any financial benefits to attend or succeed in school. According to Sheldon (2012), due to distance factor most rural schools are rarely visited by quality assurance officers. According to a UNICEF study carried out in six focus districts (Nairobi, Baringo, Mombasa, Garissa, Kwale and Kisumu) in 1998, the proximity and access to primary school is a predetermining factor to enrolment and retention. In ASALs areas, distance between schools and homes is far and the educational delivery systems are often incompatible with the lifestyle of nomadic people. Limited number of schools and highly dispersed rural population, force children to traverse difficult terrain and lack of transport makes access to schools more difficult for primary pupils. Studies done by Chimombo (2005) indicate that school location; rural and urban has an influence on learner’s academic gains and enrolment. Lockhead and Vaspoor (1990) noted that children who lived far way from school were prone to absenteeism and fatigue. Long distance reduces the chance of pupils going back for lunch especially in those schools where lunch programs are not offered. The weather conditions also make schooling difficult especially during rainy and cold seasons. The ever-changing season spell doom to most of the rural children; since they are rained on or exposed to extremely cold conditions than usual. Besides, the path routes used daily tend to become muddy and slippery. Mt.Elgon has a terrain, which has steep valleys and hills especially in Chepyuk and Kopsiro zones, hence; pupils are exposed to rough conditions during rainy and cold season. It
becomes more dangerous with lightning and thunderstorms. For pupils who are day scholars it is a nightmare, Kabiru and Njenga (2009)

Currently with devolved government, the counties are supposed to look into the development of Early Childhood Development (ECD) in their respective counties. It will not just be enough to construct ECD centers but there is need to check who these centers are serving and how far these children are coming from so as to cater for all children without discrimination.

The aim of education system in Kenya is transforming the country into a newly industrialized middle income country providing a high quality of life to all citizens in a clean and secure environment (Republic of Kenya, 2010). Kenya being one of 164 governments that pledged the achievement of EFA goals by 2015 and in line with the development agenda as spelt out in the vision 2030, has to put in place the right policies that will bring equality in provision of basic education to reduce disparity between regions, especially children belonging to ethnic minority and the most vulnerable and disadvantaged. The best policies for each region can be formulated after situational analysis so as to come up with appropriate policies since regions differ in many aspects such as geographical location, culture, lifestyle and challenges in the day to day life.

Early Childhood Development and Education (ECDE) being the first formal agent of socialization (Kibera and Kimokoti, 2007) calls on the attention of all stakeholders to critically address challenges related to issues of access, equity, quality and relevance of ECDE programs. Mukogondo division is missing out in access and equity of ECDE. The pastoralist community in Mukogondo division Laikipia North sub-county, Laikipia
County, belongs to the ethnic minority living in harsh environmental conditions that hamper early childhood development and education therefore hindering the achievement of EFA goals by 2015. The purpose of this study was to carry out situational analysis of the community by looking at how distance from home to pre-school centers affects pre-school pupils’ attendance, school entry age and academic performance at lower primary school level.

1.2 Statement Problem

Research has shown that pre-school attendance contributes positively to a child’s formal education growth and development. It’s associated with increase in school readiness for primary school which is an important predictor of school achievement. It has been shown that early childhood education can be a major input into a child’s formal education growth and development. The issue of enrolment of children to pre-school has been a major concern all over the world and policy frameworks in many Governments do not adequately address issues concerning Early Childhood Development programmes. Due to introduction of Free Primary Education, (FPE) in Kenya since 2003, some parents are circumventing the pre-school level by enrolling their children in primary school without going through pre-school. Despite being an important policy issue, there have been diversions where enrolment for preschool learners has not received much attention. In terms of age entry most parents take their children to school at a certain age far above the recommended age of three years due to long distance. The enrolment rate of pre-school has been low in Mukogodo division. This may have a negative effect on academic performance at lower primary level. Thus the study therefore sought to investigate the effect of long distance on pre-school and early primary school pupils.
1.3 Purpose of the Study

The aim of the study was to assess the effect of long distance between home and pre-school centers on Pre-school attendance, school entry age and how this factors affect academic performance at lower primary level.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The study was guided by the following objectives:

1) To establish the effect of the long distance to pre-school centers on pre-school pupils attendance.

2) To explore the effect of long distance to pre-school on pre-school entry age.

3) To explore the extent to which long distance affects academic performance at lower primary school level.

1.5 Research Question

1) What is the effect of long distance from home to pre-school centers on pre-school attendance?

2) How does the long distance affect school entry age?

3) How does pre-school attendance affect academic performance at lower primary level?
1.6 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study will assist education authorities of various states to decide where a particular type of school should be located; the size of a school in each location; whether a new school should be built or otherwise among others.

1.7 Delimitations and Limitations of the study

1.7.1 Delimitations of the study

The study is confined to pre-school children, primary school pupils, teachers, and ECD sub-county officer. The children who dropped out of school at lower primary level were not present to provide the data and therefore the researcher relied on school records and the information from the teachers.

1.7.2 Limitations of the study

During the study, the researcher faced with difficulties in getting respondents to answer questions due to language barrier and also explaining some of the concepts seemed to be difficult. The researcher was forced to look for research assistant to help her to translate to the respondents and explain to them in a language they understand better. Due to sensitivity of the study topic some respondents felt embarrassed. The researcher created a good rapport with the respondents and explained to them the purpose of the study and encouraged them that its confidential.

1.8 Assumptions

It was assumed that:

1) All children were physically and mentally healthy.

2) All parents were willing to send their children to school.
3) ECD enrolment was not affected by nomadism.

1.9 Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by justice and fairness theory (1971) which advocates for principles of justice to guide modern social order. It was developed by John Rawl and explains the importance of free and equal persons of political and personal liberty and equal opportunity and cooperative arrangement of all irrespective of their social status. It develops a concept of social justice from the view that people are free and equal thus education at all levels should be designed in such a way as to remove external obstacles of any nature that prevents children from marginalized, minority and disadvantaged in arid and semi-arid lands from taking advantage of inborn talent which speeds up their social development.

The theory emphasis on equal distribution of all basic goods that is liberty, opportunities income and wealth so that all persons in the society would equally be able to fulfill their interests any unequal distribution of goods, resources and opportunities limits the least favored one. Social and economic inequalities are to be organized in such a way that they to the greatest extent benefit the least advantaged and also be attached to officer and positions open to all under conditions of fair distribution of opportunities. By making pre-school education available and accessible to all children from all region its hoped that one removes the handicaps such as long distance that are inherited in being born the marginalized and the minority. It advocates that children should have equal opportunities at all levels of education disregarding their background. This will ensure that ideal conditions are created to implement the vision of equal opportunities where everybody has access to the kind and amount of education that suits him/her. According to Rawl denying a child a chance like acceptable pre-school education amounts to injustice and therefore
inequality in provision of educational opportunities. This theory relates to the study because by removing the barrier of long distance from home to school all children from marginalized communities will enroll and attend school like other children thereby receiving equal opportunities like others.

1.10 Conceptual Framework

Distance between home and pre-school centers affects pre-school attendance and school entry age which affects academic performance at primary level. Increase in distance to pre-school centers will have a negative effect on pre-school attendance and therefore academic performance at lower primary level while a decrease will have a positive effect. Distance from home to pre-school is the independent variable while pre-school attendance, pre-school entry age and lower primary academic performance are dependent variables.
Figure 1.1: Conceptual framework

Source: Researcher (2016)
1.11 Operational Definition of Terms

**Absenteeism**: Failure to attend school when a child is required in school.

**Distance**: How far children walk from their place of residence to preschool centers.

**Distance challenges**: Challenges resulting from long distance covered by children from home to preschool centers.

**Lower primary education**: Formal schooling from class one to three.

**Nomadism**: Movement of people from one place to another in search of greener pastures.

**Nutrition**: The processing of the nutrient material principally food and

**Pre school attendance**: Starting schooling right from pre school.

**Rich Social Environment**: An environment where social interaction between children and/or adults are frequent and common.

**School Readiness**: It is the physical, cognitive and social preparedness of a child to start schooling.

**Social Environment**: Immediate physical and social setting in which people live.

**Stimulation**: Action of various agents or stimuli on a person’s thinking.
CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews relevant studies and any other knowledge related to this research. This will include learning dynamics, pre-school attendance and school readiness, Nutrition and cognitive development, Social environment and cognitive development and stimulation and cognitive development.

2.1 Impact of Long Distance from home to school on attendance of pupils in pre-schools and lower primary

Research has shown that pre-school attendance contributes positively to a Child’s formal education growth and development. It is associated with increase in school readiness for primary school which is an important predictor of school achievement ( Forget Dubois et al 2007). It has been shown that early childhood education can be a major input into a Child’s formal education growth and development (Barnet, 1995 pg 40).

Children who go through pre-school have a better chance for start of primary education and a chance for improvement later in life. According to Bowman Donovan and Burns (2001 pg 78) ECE programs with curriculum aims that are specified and the domains integrated prepare children to master the complex demands of formal schooling.

In Michigan children who were between 3-4 years old from low income families who did not attend pre-school education were five times likely to become law breakers by the age of eighteen years than those who attended. Abecedarian project (1972) shows that children
who come from low income families but attend quality pre-school program are less likely to repeat grades, drop out of school, become law breakers or need special education.

According to a research conducted in May 2011 by applied survey research shows that preschool attendance is critical for sustaining the school readiness skills. The study established through a study conducted in California on 640 young California pupils shows a strong correlation between high score on school readiness assessment measure and reading proficiency. However, those children who missed 10% of the kindergarten and first grade years scored 60 points less than those with good attendance. The research shows how missed days as early as pre-school translates into weaker reading skills and makes a clear case for engaging children in pre-school and removing any obstacle that would hinder pre-school attendance.

In Nigeria, school attendance levels are lower for girls than for boys, (NPC and RTI International 2011). According to the 2010 NEDS the main reason that parents and guardians gave for their primary-aged children having never attended school was the distance to school.

Several studies have carried out statistical analyses of school attendance based on household survey data. Kazeem et., al. (2010) estimated a model of school attendance based on household characteristics taken from 2004 NDHS data, controlling for various demographic aspects such as wealth and location. They found that household wealth, religion, mothers’ and fathers’ education, and distance to the nearest school were the most important determinants of child school attendance.
School supply has an impact on both pupil access, because distance to school is a major factor in children’s non-enrolment, and on school quality, since insufficient schools to satisfy demand for schooling can lead to overcrowded classrooms (NPC and RTI International 2011). Rather than looking at school provision directly, the 2010 NEDS considered school provision in terms of school proximity. This is particularly important as distance to school was the most widely cited reason in the survey for children never having attended school, mentioned by almost a third of respondents and by a higher proportion of poorer and more rural households.

It is also confirmed as a major determinant of school attendance in statistical analyses of household survey data (e.g. Lincove 2009; Kazeem et al., 2010). School proximity may also be related to concerns about safety on the way to and from school, which was specifically mentioned by about 16% of respondents nationally, with higher figures for the North East and South West. Other qualitative studies also report pupil concerns about the distance from school being a potential deterrent from educational participation, especially for girls (Okojie 2008; Chege et al. 2008; Bakari 2013; Coinco 2012; Dunne et al. 2013).

According to the 2010 NEDS, around 68% of families nationally are said to be within a kilometer of the nearest primary school, a figure that drops to 62% if only government schools are counted, and to 54% and 56% for the North East and North West respectively (NPC and RTI International 2011). However, for around 7% of households nationally – and almost double that percentage of households in the North East – it takes over an hour to travel over 6 km to reach the nearest primary school. Seventeen percent of children nationally travel over 3 km. Inevitably, these figures are much higher for rural areas. In
addition to possible safety concerns, the long distance will have an adverse effect on the many pupils who, as statistics testify, are hungry, malnourished and of poor health (NPC and RTI International, 2011).

Arubayi (2005) compared distance travelled to school by pupils/students in Edo and Delta States and the effect on attendance. He concluded that the location of a sizeable number of primary and secondary schools in both Edo and Delta States were far away from the residences of the pupils/students and this had some effect on school attendance. There is a paucity of empirical evidence on distance travelled to school by pupils and students and its consequent effect on school attendance in many States in Nigeria, including Anambra, Enugu and Ebonyi States. Also, research evidence showed that long distances travelled to school are among the major reasons for high dropout rates in primary and secondary schools in Nigeria, and the South Eastern States of Nigeria have been observed as recording large numbers of school dropouts. (Arubayi, 2005; Duze 2005; Madumere, 1991; Onakpoma, 2008).

Research done in Ethiopia also pointed out that distance from home to school is an important factor in education access particularly in rural areas (Nekatibeb, 2002). The greater the distance the less likely it is the child will attend. Long distance to school causes irregular attendance and temporary withdrawals from schools which in the long run led to dropping out from school (Kiroto, 2012).

In a study done in Tanzania in 2009 by Lyabwene Mtahabwa, it was established that the major access problems to ECE are those related to geographical area and age (Mtahabwa, 2011). Access according to geographical distance favors urban children has also been fund
elsewhere in the world including Bangladesh (Nath, 2006), Kenya (UNESCO/OECD, 2005) and Ghana (Mtahabwa, 2011).

Missing pre-school can be reduced when schools, communities and families should join together to monitor and promote attendance as well as to identify and address the factors that prevent young pupils from attending pre-school such as long distance from home to pre-school centers (Forget Dubois et al., 2007).

Many researchers have done research on effect of long distance on attendance of primary and secondary schools, what causes long distance from home to school but they have not done on effect of long distance from home to school on pre-school pupils attendance. Its from this the researcher sought to investigate the impact of long distance from home to school on pre-school and early primary pupils attendance in Mukongodo division.

2.2 Effect of Long distance from home to school on entry age in pre-school and early primary pupils

Learning is a dynamic process and its outcome is more evident when it begins early in life and continues through adulthood (Heckman, 2000 pg 50). The learning environment should be good with enough and safe physical space. It should also begin at an appropriate starting age. Since the community lives in dispersed villages, the ECD centers are build in search a way that they serve a number of villages. This means that a number of children walk for long distances to get to the center. The children therefore have to start schooling when they are old enough to walk for long distances and this could be far above the appropriate age. Early childhood is the education children get early in life. It’s an important stage for children cognitive development where children acquire abilities and skills. This learning is
greatly affected by external factors including the environment where the children get education during early years of life. (Bowman Donovan and Burns, 2001). According to Chanker and Blair (2008), factors that affect child development are grouped into;

1) Biological factors

2) Interpersonal relationship

3) Environmental factor

4) Early environments and experiences

Sparse population may be an advantage as opposed to dense population since children will have enough space to play but when distance affects the children negatively it is no longer an advantage.

Access according to age in Tanzania has since formalization of ECE always been in favor of older children. Similar cases have been reported in other countries like Kenya, something quite opposite of most successful ECE programs should operate. Best results occur when ECE programs are designed to cater for children in their first few years when development processes in various domains are rapid. Distance between schools and home affects young children because parents are afraid to let the young ones walk alone and they may be kept out of school unless there was someone to accompany them (Sifuna, 1980). This force parents to wait until they reach the age they can walk the long distance to school making the pupils to start schooling at the age not recommended.

When schools are far and transport poor, as in many rural areas of Africa, this can affect school enrolment. A study of 179 villages in Chad (Lehman, 2003 cited in UNESCO, 2015: 171) found that school enrolment dropped dramatically when the nearest school was in another village and that female pupils fell faster than that of boys. School distance was
also a key factor in hindering girls enrolment in school in Nigeria (Kazeem et al. 2010: 315). A large –scale study in Ghana los concluded that ‘… distance to school plays a very important role in school enrolment and therefore reasonably expanding the number of schools to rural areas will go along way to promote school enrolment’ (Gaddah et al., 2016:151).

According to Sheldon (2012), due to distance factor most rural schools are rarely visited by quality assurance officers. According to a UNICEF study carried out in six focus districts (Nairobi, Baringo, Mombasa, Garissa, Kwale and Kisumu) in 1998, the proximity and access to primary school is a predetermining factor to enrolment and affects the age entry of a pupil because parents fear their children walking long distance.

Mt.Elgon has a terrain, which has steep valleys and hills especially in Chepyuk and Kopsiro zones, hence; pupils are exposed to rough conditions during rainy and cold season. It becomes more dangerous with lightning and thunderstorms. For pupils who are young may not be able to survive so parents wait until they reach at least seven years its when they can go to school, (Kabiru and Njenga,2009).

Much as covering literature in terms of addressing the above issues, it has failed short of explicating the following: the effect of long distance from home to school on age entry of pre-school children. This study sought to establish the impact of long distance from home to school on age entry in pre schools.
2.3 Effects of Long distance from home to school on pre-school and early primary schools performance

Poor academic performance has been associated with the location of primary schools in various studies. Numerous studies link learner’s poor academic performance in specific with the walking distance which the learners travel to reach their schools. For example; Engelbrecht et al. (1996) in a study which investigated the location of schools, revealed that distance traveled by learners from home to school correlated positively with the academic performance of the students. The researcher elaborates further that most of the learners were affected by the distance which made them use most of their time on traveling than learning.

Similarly, Galabawa (2002) in a study which he conducted to and using and revealed that, when schools are located far distance from home, academic performance of learners is affected, as most of them remain with little time to concentrate on their(private or in school) studies due to the long distances they travel to reach their schools. A recent study conducted by Germany-based Education International showed that long journeys to school have a negative impact on students’ health and on their education achievement levels.

The investigation by Morakinyo (2003) on the effect of distance to school students found that the falling level of academic achievement was attributed to teachers non-use of verbal reinforcement strategy.

Moyo (2013) investigated the effects of poverty on access to education involving students from Tshazi Secondary School in the Insiza district in Kenya through questionnaires, interviews and content analysis. In that study, Moyo associated walking over long distances
to and from school might lead to late coming at school and at home after school in evening. It was also explained that because of longer walking distance, fatigue and hunger lead students to drowsiness during learning as a result of walking over long distances compared to students from rich families who usually cycled to school making them at the advantage of arriving at school early without having lost any considerable amount of energy. Walking distance as it has been identified by several researchers appears to be a common factor for poor academic performance.

Adeboyeje, Olaniyi and Adepoju (2003) identify home-school distance through involvement of stakeholders as one among several factors that causes poor performance of students in public examinations. Other factors were identified to include poor location of the school, incessant changes in government policies, closure of schools, which is contingent upon teachers strike action, high student teacher ratio, poor supervision, monitoring and evaluation machinery, lack of good textbooks, poor content and context of instruction, poor and non-conductive environment among others. In their explanation, Onderi, Kiplangat, and Awino (2014) citing Oriko (2002) and Reche et., al. (2012) indicate that walking long distances to school greatly make students reach it with empty stomachs and lateness influencing negatively, their academic performance. Geographical location of the school affect attitude of leaner’s towards academic performance (Onomuodeke, 1995).

Walking distance as it has been identified by several researchers appears to be a common factor for poor academic performance. Adeboyeje, Olaniyi and Adepoju (2003) identify home-school distance through involvement of stakeholders as one among several factors that causes poor performance of students in public examinations.
Another source of worry is that distance travelled to school has some measure of relationship to ills like absenteeism, delinquency, truancy, lateness, indiscipline, and non-attendance to school. These ills, either singly or combined ultimately affect achievement at school.

In primary schools and secondary schools where girls are day students, travelling long distances before arriving in school decreases their performance in school since they arrive in school already tired. Participation and performance in any subject according to SMT is then hampered. In Tanzania and Ghana, boys’ boarding schools have opened up admission for girls from the community as day students. Travelling long distances is still an issue, however, and girls arrive at school late, missing the first lesson of the day or get back home too tired for any meaningful studies. When they live long distances from school, girls are not able to participate in private tuition classes held after school hours or discuss homework, assignments as they are expected to leave school compound by a certain time or they need to hurry back home before darkness falls. In some cases where girls live a long distances from school, they are forced to take up lodgings in town where the school is located which gets them exposed to many unscrupulous and harassing situations. Some families allow their daughters to lodge with relatives who may not necessarily be the right people to select as guardians. When schools are some distances from home, parents tend to worry about the safety of their children especially the girl child and often unwilling to let them go to school. All these hardships frustrate the girl child more their male counterparts and thus makes them (the girls) perform poorly academically. Long distances from school promote lateness and truancy among students. In some schools, especially primary schools, lateness guarantees punishment which is usually by canning. Girls would
rather skip school for the entire day than risk this form of punishment which is painful and embarrassing. Lateness also results in missing the early morning lessons which many primary schools is mathematics. Mathematics is a hierarchical subject and when lessons are missed, it is difficult to join in at a later stage.

Unfortunately, most schools are unwilling to change the time table to remedy the situation. The girl child unlike the boys does face sexual harassment as a result of the long distance they walk to school. They can easily be deceived by young boys and sometimes men and they end up being sexually abused. Very often complaint of sexual harassment of girls is ignored and many girls do not report incidents which occur.

Some girls withdraw and become reclusive when they are disturbed by sexual harassment. Once girls start withdrawing from people, their performance in school goes down. When the person sexually harassing the girl is along the way to school, she begins to skip school and ultimately drop-out of school. Boys are also affected by long distance to school but not like their female counterparts. Distance can affect academic achievement of boys in various ways. Some may carry football in their bags and play it on their way to school since the distance is usually far and they end up being late to class or not even getting to school at all. Some boys as a result of the distance they travel to school developed hatred for going to school, some may go out and end up hiding in the neighborhood while the parents thinks that he is in school. All these on the long run affect the child performance in school especially the girl child.

The above literature failed to establish how long distance from home to school affects pre-school and early primary pupils performance, a research gap that this study filled.
2.6 Summary of Reviewed Literature

The discussed literature has identified the extent to which long distance affects attendance, age entry and performance in school. Much as covering literature in terms of addressing the above issues, it has failed short of explicating the following: how long distance from home to school affects the attendance of pupils in pre-school and early primary. This study seeks to establish the effect of long distance from home to school on attendance of pupils in pre-school and early primary. Secondly, the literature above failed to discuss how long distance affects the age entry in pre schools. This study seeks to establish how long distance from home to school makes it difficult for parents to take their children to school at appropriate age. Thirdly, much has been discussed on how distance affects performance generally. They have not discussed on how it affects the performance of pupils in early primary and pre-primary. This study sought to investigate how long distance from home to school affects the performance of the pre-school children.
CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of the methods that were used in the research. The study areas covered were the research design, research methodology, location of the study, the target population, sampling techniques and sample size, research instruments, data collection procedures, methods of data analysis and lastly the ethics and logistical considerations.

3.1 Research Design

The study employed descriptive survey research design. According to the Office of Human Research Protection (OHRP) a descriptive study is any study that is not experimental. Bickam and Rog (1998) suggest that the study answers questions like; what is and what was. Descriptive survey research design was advantageous to this study because it was simple and easy to administer, appropriate for educational facts finding and yielded enormous accurate information on people’s feelings, attitude, opinion, interest and problems. It also allowed the researcher to come face to face with the people selected for the study and therefore looked for facts adequately, asked for opinions, described, analyzed and interpreted the factors contributing to low academic performance at lower primary level that stemmed out right from ECD.

3.2 Variables

A variable is a result of a force or is itself a force. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), a dependent variable sometimes called criterion variables attempt to show the total
influence coming from the influence of the independent variable. A dependent variable changes since it’s a function of the independent variable. At pre-school level, the study examined how distance as an independent variable influenced pre-school entry age, pre-school attendance and absenteeism which are dependent variables. At lower primary level, the study examined pre-school attendance an independent variable against performance at lower primary a dependent variable.

3.3 Research Methodology

The study employed both quantitative and qualitative methodology. The questionnaire which is normally quantitative was used to collect statistical data from respondents and back it up with interviewing for selected individuals from the sample which is qualitative. The interview involved both open ended and closed questionnaires. Closed questions was used for fixed facts and open ended questions to capture the ideas and feelings about the problem in question.

Questionnaires ensured all the information needed from the respondents for the research was collected. The study also used the existing records on academic performance both at pre-school level and primary level. This helped check if the trend had been the same in the past years.

3.4 Location of the Study

The area of study was Mukogondo division Laikipia north sub-county, Laikipia County, Kenya. It is one of the areas in the Laikipia County where large tracks of land are owned by ranchers. The residents of this region are basically from Maasai community who still own land communally. Most of them live in temporarily villages called Manyatta while
others live in semi-permanent homes due to decline in nomadic life. The presence of
ranches in this region makes this division very large but with low population. The total
population in this region is 13176 people with 624 living in urban areas. It covers an area
of 248 kilometer squire and includes former Mukogondo, Mumonyot, Ilgwesi and Ildigiri
locations. There are 17 primary schools in the division some of which are feeder schools.
Each school has an ECD center. There are also two ECD centers under the church and one
which is private. For one school to have the required population it has to get pupils from
far. This therefore means that the pupils have to walk for long distances to school in both
ECD and primary level. Wild animals are also a common phenomenon. They are seen
during the day and especially during their seasonal migration or in search of food.

The location was ideal for the study because the pre-school centers are situated far due to
presence of ranches, low population and communal land ownership.

3.5 Target Population

The target population was the pre-school teachers, lower primary school class teachers and
pupils of the sample pre-school centers and primary schools and also the ECD sub-county
officer. Since primary school were 17 in total the sample target was seven primary schools
and seven pre-school centers within the primary schools. The sample formed 47.05%
higher than the 20% which is minimum recommended by Gay (1992).
Table 3.1: Sample selection of the schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School category</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Sample schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public pre-schools</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public primary</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.5.1 Sampling Technique and Sample Size

Sampling is the process of selecting a sub-set of cases from a large population so as to draw conclusions about the entire set (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). The research used systematic random sampling. According to Ekiru (2012) “systematic sampling is a type of probability sampling method in which sample members from a larger population are selected according to a random starting point and a fixed, periodic interval.” The researcher assigned a number to all schools in the region and then picked all the schools with odd numbers between one and seventeen that is school number three, number five, number seven, number nine, number eleven, number thirteen and number fifteen. The study dealt with the primary section and the pre-school section of the seven sample schools.

To select a sample of pre-school children and primary pupils, the researcher used stratified random sampling where the population was put in clusters based on age and then chose a simple random sample from the cluster. Table 3.2 below summarizes the sample of pre-school and primary pupils, teachers and ECD Sub-county officer.
Table 3.2: Sample Size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLASS</th>
<th>AGE IN YEARS</th>
<th>NUMBER OF PUPIL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PRE-SCHOOL</td>
<td>3 Years</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 - 5 Years</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Above 6 years</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Class teacher</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ONE</td>
<td>5 Years and below</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Between 5 – 6 Years</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Above 6 Years</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Class teacher</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TWO</td>
<td>Below 6 Years</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6 – 7 Years</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Above 7 Years</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Class teacher</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THREE</td>
<td>Below 7 Years</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7 - 8 Years</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Above 8 Years</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Class teacher</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECD- Sub-county officer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.6 Research Instruments

The study used questionnaires for the pre-school class teachers and lower primary school class teachers which combined both open and close ended. The close ended was to restrict and direct the respondent to the area of interest of the research and therefore provide only the required information on gender, age, distance from home to pre-school, if the child attended pre-school or not and the days the child missed as per the school register. On the
same questionnaire, there were open-ended questions to allow the respondent give his or her views especially in areas dealing with attitudes and feelings.

The researcher constructed two questionnaire for both pre-school pupils lower primary class pupils, the questionnaires contained two parts; background information that is where the school was situated rural or urban, class population and grade. The second part contained questions on variables in the problem.

The study also had an interview schedule for the ECDE sub-county officer where the researcher engaged him in a face to face interview and the responses written down. An interview was considered appropriate since the sample was small. This enabled the researcher to get more information from respondents than would have been possible when using questionnaire.

3.7 Pilot Study

A pilot study was first carried out in one ECD centre and one lower primary school class which was not included in the actual research to check on the response rate, validity and reliability of the results of research instruments.

The pilot study enabled the researcher to be familiar with research instruments and their administration procedures as well as identifying items that required modifications. The results helped the researcher to correct inconsistencies arising from the instruments which ensured that they measure what was intended.

3.7.1 Validity

Validity is the degree which the sample of test items represents the content the test is designed to measure. Content validity which was employed by this study measured the
degree to which data collected using a particular instrument represented a specific domain or content of a particular concept. Mugenda & Mugenda (1999) contend that the usual procedure in assessing the content that the usual procedure in assessing the content validity of a measure is to use a professional or expert in a particular field. To establish the validity of the research instruments, the researcher did content validity by seeking opinions of experts in the field of study especially the researchers’ supervisor and lecturers for information. This facilitated the necessary revision and modification of the research instruments thereby enhancing validity.

3.7.2 Reliability

Reliability is defined as the measure of the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results after repeated trials (Mugenda and Mugenda 2003). It is the degree of consistency of the instruments. The study used test-retest technique to determine the reliability of the instrument. This involves administering the same instruments twice to the same group of respondents with a two week interval between the two.

The two scores were then correlated to establish if contents in the instruments are consistent in obtaining the same responses every time they are administered. The Pearson’s product moment correlation formula below was used to measure the correlation.

\[ r = \frac{\sum xy - (\sum x)(\sum y)}{\sqrt{\sum x^2 - (\sum x^2)} \sqrt{\sum y^2 - (\sum y^2)}} \]

Where: \( \sum x = \) Sum of scores in x distribution

\( \sum y = \) Sum of scores in the y distribution
\[ \sum x^2 = \text{Sum of squared scores in x distribution} \]

\[ \sum y^2 = \text{Sum of squared scores of y distribution} \]

\[ \sum xy = \text{Sum of product of paired x and y scores} \]

\[ N = \text{Number of paired x and y scores} \]

\[ r = \text{Coefficient of reliability} \]

A reliability of 0.84 for the head teachers’ instruments and 0.80 for the class teachers’ instruments were obtained. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), a coefficient reliability of 0.80 or more shows high reliability of the data.

3.8 Data Collection Techniques

The authority was sought by the researcher to carry out research from the National Commission For Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). She then sought a clearance from both the District commissioner and the District Education Officer, Mukongodo division before the researcher going to the field. After this, the researcher proceeded to the selected schools and seeks audience with the head teacher. A request was made to the head teachers to allow the researcher to give out the questionnaires to ECE teachers. The researcher waited for the class teachers to fill the questionnaires before collecting them and proceeding to the next school. The researcher visited selected homes to administer the interview to the parents’ representatives.

3.9 Data Analysis

This is the whole process that starts after data collection and ends at interpretation and processing of the data (Kothari, 2004). Data analysis refers to categorization, ordering and
summarizing of data collected to obtain answers to research the questions (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). The most common method used in reporting a descriptive survey research is by developing frequency distributions, calculation of percentages and tabulating them (Gay 1996). The researcher used statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). Qualitative data was analyzed through content analysis. Data was analyzed by organizing it into themes, patterns and subtopics. Conclusions and narrations were made for the content in the items that cannot be quantified. The analyzed data was presented in frequency distribution tables, percentages, pie charts and other descriptive statistics.

Quantitative data was easy to analyze as it was captured in form of numbers. Data analysis therefore consisted of measuring the numerical values. The findings of the study were presented in descriptive statistics such as frequency tables and percentages.

3.10 Logistical and Ethical Consideration

3.10.1 Logistical consideration

Before the researcher embarked into data collection exercise, she obtained an introduction letter from Graduate School of Kenyatta University which she presented to NACOSTI to get a permit allowing her to carry out research in Mukogondo division. She also obtained permission from ECD sub-county officer Laikipia North to visit ECD centers within the area of his jurisdiction and also have an interview with them. In addition, she obtained an introduction letter and permission from the county director Laikipia County to visit primary schools within the region. The researcher obtained permission from the head teachers and also made arrangements on the time and the individual pupils, ECD children and ECD teacher who would fill the questionnaire. The researcher got consent from the parents of children used in the study. The respondent was assured confidentiality and instructed on
how to fill the questionnaire and administer interviews. They were then given enough time to fill after which the researcher collected for analysis.

The researcher with permission from the head teacher accessed the past students records to check on the academic performance tread. The data collected both qualitative and quantitative was analyzed, presented and recommendations made to help improve performance in this region.

3.10.2 Ethical consideration

While preparing for data collection and analysis, the researcher maintained anonymity by separating information such as code numbers from the data itself. During the research, participants were requested not to write their names on the questionnaires. The study ensured respect for people by ensuring the participants choose to participate through signing of the consent form. Confidentiality was ensured by having questionnaires that does not reveal one’s identity and the computer used on data analysis was protected using password to protect it from unauthorized entry.
CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings, interpretation and discussions of the study. The study was based on the following objectives to: establish the effect of the long distance to ECD centers on pre-school attendance explored the effect of long distance to pre-school on pre-school entry age. The study also explored the extent to which pre-school attendance affects academic performance at lower primary school level and established the effects of age on academic performance at lower primary level.

4.1 Demographic Information

The demographic information of both lower primary school and pre-school teachers included the gender, professional qualifications and the teaching experience.

4.1.1 Gender for Lower Primary School Teachers

The teachers of lower primary school classes were asked to state their gender and Figure 4.1 presents the results.
Figure 4.1: Gender of Lower Primary School Teachers

As shown in Figure 4.1 above, majority 10 (60.0%) of the teachers were females while 7 (40.0%) were males. The presence of more female teachers in lower primary school classes could be attributed to deeply ingrained gender stereotypes combined with male having difficulty in dealing with children of lower ages. Secondly females tend to have more of a liking for the little kids and have a temperament suited to working with them as compared to their male counterparts.

4.2.2 Gender of Pre-School Teachers

The pre-school teachers were also asked to state their genders and Figure 4.2 presents the results.
Figure 4.2: Gender of Pre-school Teachers

Figure 4.2 show that majority 14 (91.7%) of preschool teachers were female while only 3(8.3%) were male. This could be attributed to the difficulty faced by men in handling little children hence they shy away for taking pre-school teaching jobs. Stereotypically, people see men who want to work with little kids as a bit weird. Generally, women have more emotional and practical attachment to younger children than men because they are the ones who look after and bring up their own children at home hence the higher number of female teachers in preschools as compared to male teachers.

4.2.3 Professional Qualification for primary Teachers

During data collection, teachers in lower classes were asked to state their professional qualification and the results showed that all teachers (100%) who participated in this study had P1 certificate in primary school teaching.
4.2.4 Level of Pre-School Teachers’ Education

In a bid to establish the level of education for preschool teachers, they were asked to state their level of education and Figure 4.3 presents the results.

Figure 4.3: Level of Education for Pre-school Teachers

Figure 4.3 above shows that 75.0% of pre-school teachers had secondary school level education, while 25.0% were teaching using primary school level of education.

4.2.5 Professional Training

To establish the extent of professional level of training for preschool teachers, Figure 4.4 presents the findings.
As shown in Figure 4.4, majority 66.7% of preschool teachers and lower primary teachers had certificate in early childhood education while, 33.3% had diploma in early childhood education. Sustained professional development of preschool teachers is associated with more stimulating and positive child outcome and teacher behavior as it helps teachers to master curriculum content, teachers skills and overcome challenges encountered in the teaching of young children. Professional preschool teacher training also help them in ensuring diverse needs of the learners through teacher parent engagement. Professional training of pre-school teachers helps promote teachers knowledge of holistic child development including mental capabilities, emotional and physical growth and spiritual manipulation and self expression (Doherty & Hughes, 2009).

Professional development of early childhood educators is therefore critical to the quality of experiences afforded to children (Martinez & Zaslow, 2006).
4.2.6 Lower primary Teacher Experience

Teachers of lower classes were asked to state their teaching experience in terms of years and Figure 4.5 presents the findings.

![Pie chart showing teaching experience distribution]

**Figure 4.5: Lower primary Teachers’ Experience**

As shown in Figure 4.5 the findings show that 50.0% had taught for 1-5 years, followed by 37.5% who had less than one year experience and only 13.5% had taught for more than 6 years. Apart from helping teachers to adequately master the curriculum content, experience helps them to effectively handle learners individually and address their unique needs. It helps teachers have deeper understandings of child development and early education issues; provide richer educational experiences for all children, including those who are vulnerable and disadvantaged.

4.2.7 Pre-School Teachers’ Experience

An item was included in the questionnaires which sort for information on the pre-school teachers experience and Figure 4.6 presents the findings.
Figure 4.6: Pre-school Teachers’ Experience

Figure 4.6 shows that 42.0% of preschool teachers had over 4 years of teaching experience, 41.0% had 3 years of experience while 17.0% had below 2 years of experience. Preschool teachers caring for children are required to meet certain teaching experience and receive professional experience to enhance their abilities to support young children’s learning.

4.2 Effects of Long Distance to ECD Centers on Pre-School Attendance

Objective one of the study sought to establish the effect of the long distance to ECD centers on pre-school attendance. The pre-school classes comprised of baby class, middle class and pre-unit classes. The pre-school teachers were asked to state whether the distance from home to preschool affected pre-school attendance and 91.7% agreed while only 8.3% disagreed. The study also indicated that 91.7% also agreed that distance from home to school affected the enrolment of children in pre-schools. The study also established that 91.7% of the pre-schools were based in the rural areas while 8.3% in the urban location. Majority of teachers said that children who live within 1km radius from school start schooling earlier than those living far and performed better comparatively. This concur with the research done in Ethiopia which pointed out that distance from home to school is
an important factor in education access particularly in rural areas (Nekatibeb, 2002). They also go to school earlier enough to give their parents room to go for work or do other duties that can generate income. On the other hand the boy child may face lateness challenges in attending classes as some of them are mostly engaged in looking after family livestock.

Due to long distances to ECD centers in Mukogondo division a number of children miss early childhood education and therefore have reduced school readiness for primary school which could be a contributor of poor academic performance at primary school level. This concurs with Kiroto (2012) who states that long distance to school causes irregular attendance and temporary withdrawals from schools which in the long run led to dropping out from school.

### 4.3 Effects of Long Distance on Pre- School pupils’ Entry Age

Objective two of the study sought to explore the effect of long distance to pre-school on pre-school entry age. The preschool teachers were asked state whether the distance from home to preschool affected preschool entry age and 91.7% also agreed while only 8.3% disagreed. The preschool teachers were asked to state the distance covered from their homes to preschools and Figure 4.7 presents the findings.

![Figure 4.7: Distance Covered to Preschool](image)

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41
As in figure 4.7, majority 75.0% of pre-school children covered a distance of beyond two kilometres, 16.7% covered a distance of one–two kilometers while 8.3% covered a distance of below one kilometers. The study established from interviews with sub county education officials that the average age for preschool in the area was 5 years due long distance between home and preschools. The children also took long to join preschools due the presence of wild animals which made their parents to take them to school at an age that they can evade wild animals when challenged. During interviews with sub county education officials, the study established that enrolment of school age children has since improved over time because their parents have embraced education due to Government policy of free and compulsory education for all children which is also enshrined in the constitution. Pupils may fail to attend pre-school or start schooling late due to the long distance from home to this centers. Parents may prefer their children to attain an age which will enable the children walk to the centers without strain which may be far above the recommended age of three years. This concur with Sifuna (1980) who states that distance between schools and home affects young children because parents are afraid to let the young ones walk alone and they may be kept out of school unless there was someone to accompany them (Sifuna, 1980). In a study done in Tanzania in 2009 by Lyabwene Mtahabwa, it was established that the major access problems to ECE are those related to geographical area and age (Mtahabwa, 2011).
4.4 Effect of long distance on Pupils Academic Performance at Lower Primary School Level

Objective three of this study, sought explore the extent to which pre-school attendance affects academic performance at lower primary school level. Children who go through pre-school have a better chance to start primary education and a chance for improvement later in life. The preschool teachers were asked to give the report of enrolment and attendance rate of preschool learners in their respective school and the findings showed that there was an average of 36 boys, 37 girls and an average total of 73 learners in preschools. In lower primary classes, the study revealed that 81.3% of the pupils attended classes regularly with 25.0% repetition rates. The study further revealed that 16.7% had dropped from school and reasons being lack of interest in schooling, some had grown older and could not cope with curriculum and poverty. The study established that failure to attend early childhood education in Mukogondo Division was due to the long distances and was one of the causes of school dropout since the pupils were not able to abide by school rules.

The study also established that some children could not attend school due to nomadic nature of their parents, moving from place to place in search of greener pastures. This could also be as a result of lack of feeding program initiated by the schools as all (100%) of schools interviewed did not have a school feeding program but 91.7% could not afford to carry snacks to school. However allowing children to carry snacks from home has some far reaching on some children as they could not afford it; most of the families had one meal per day and some children could come to school without taking breakfast.

The preschools managed under County Government did not charge school fees while those that were privately owned charged school fees ranging from 5000-20000 per term.
depending on the status of the school. To mitigate against the challenges that may affect the learning programs due to distance, the schools are encouraged to engage in school feeding programme so that children from poor families can concentrate in studying without worries.

On academic performance at lower primary the research established that 77.7% of the children who scored an average of 250 marks and above against a possible 500 marks had in the four subsequent exams attended pre-school while only a 22.3% of those who scored below 250 marks out of the possible 500 had attended pre-school. This could imply that failure to attend pre-school made it hard for the children to master basic concepts taught at lower primary. According to Dubois et al (2007), pre-school attendance contributes positively to a Childs’ formal education growth and development. It is associated with increase in school readiness for primary school which is an important predictor of school achievement.

The study sought to establish the effect of age on academic performance at lower primary level. In terms of age for the preschool children, the study recorded an average age of 7 years old with the youngest at 3 years and oldest at 11 years. Regarding performance, the study revealed that 58.3% of preschool children repeated their classes due 87.5% poor performance and 12.5% too young to proceed to the next class. The study also established through interviews that older children who were enrolled late felt out of place with rest thereby affecting their performance in class. Due differences in age, some pupils were said to be indiscipline and disobedient in class and could run away from class especially when they realize they could face disciplinary actions for wrong doing. It was recorded that 75.0% of the children faced numerous challenges which included lack of basic needs like
good clothing, shoes, lack of food due to poverty. Thompson, (2001) found out that Children brought up in rich social environment receive age appropriate stimulation that is essential for proper brain development. Stimulation occurs in everyday experience as long as it occurs in the context of a relationship with sensitive caregivers. In terms of average performance from the last four exams taken in lower primary school classes, children who cover long distance from home to school perform poorly. Table 4.1 presents the findings.

Table 4.1: Marks Attained in the last Four Exams

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exams</th>
<th>Average Marks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exam 1</td>
<td>305/500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam 2</td>
<td>246/500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam 3</td>
<td>228/500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam 4</td>
<td>256/500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 4.1 above, the pupils scored an average of 305 marks against a possible 500 in the first exam, 246 marks in the second, 228 marks in the third exam and 256 marks in the fourth exams. This shows that the general performance of children in the lower classes was slightly above average despite that 75.0% of the children live with both parents, 12.5% living with single parents and another 12.5% with other relatives who encouraged them to go to school. The average performances were attributed to having some background education from preschools before joining standard one class in primary schools and most of them willing to learn. Their performance average performances of children who are poor and walk long distance from home to school, lead to repetition of grades and finally drop out of school due to frustration. Through interviews, the study also established
that some children especially those living with grandparents started schooling late in life since they lacked role models to encourage on the benefits of education as their grandparents are equally illiterate. This concurs with Adeboyeje, Olaniyi and Adepoju (2003) who states that home-school distance though involvement of stakeholders as one among several factors that causes poor performance of the students in examinations.
CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction
This chapter presents the summary, conclusion and recommendation according to the objectives of the study of the impact on lower primary education by the challenges of distance to the pre-school centres in Mukogondo Division Laikipia County in Kenya. The aim of the study was to assess the effect of distance between home and pre-school centers on pre-school attendance, school entry age and academic performance at lower primary level. The study was based on the following objectives to: establish the effect of the long distance to ECD centers on pre-school attendance; explored the effect of long distance to pre-school on pre-school entry age and explored the effect of long distance on lower primary school performance.

5.2 Summary
From the findings 91.7% of preschool teachers agreed that distance from home to preschool affected preschool attendance. The study also indicated that 91.7% also agreed that distance from home to school affected the enrolment of children to preschools. The study also established that 91.7% of the preschools were based in the rural areas while 8.3% in the urban location. During interviews with the teachers, the study established that children who live within 1km radius from school start schooling earlier than those living far and are likely to perform better comparatively. They also go to school earlier enough to give their parents room to go for work or do other duties that can generate income.
Majority 75.0% of preschool children covered a distance of beyond 2 km, 16.7% covered a distance of 1-2 km while 8.3% covered a distance of below 1 km. The study established from interviews with sub county education officials that the average age for preschool in the area was 5 years due long distance between home and preschools. The children also took long to join preschools due the presence of wild animals which made their parents to take them to school at an age that they can evade wild animals when challenged. During interviews with sub county education officials, the study established that enrolment of school age children has since improved over time because their parents have embraced education due to Government policy of free and compulsory education for all children which is also enshrined in the constitution. Pupils may fail to attend pre-school or start schooling late due to the long distance from home to this centers. Parents may prefer their children to attain an age which will enable the children walk to the centers without strain which may be far above the recommended age of three years.

In lower primary classes, the study revealed that 81.3% of the pupils attended classes regularly with 25.0% repetition rates. The study further revealed that not 16.7% had dropped from school and reasons being lack of interest in schooling, some had grown older and could not cope with curriculum and poverty. The study established that failure to attend early childhood education in Mukogondo Division was due to the long distances and was one of the causes of school dropout since the pupils were not able to abide by school rules. The study also established that some children could not attend school due to nomadic nature of their parents, moving from place to place in search of greener pastures. This could also be as a result of lack of feeding program initiated by the schools as all (100%) of schools interviewed did not have a school feeding program but 91.7% allowed children to
carry snacks to school. However allowing children to carry snacks from home has some far reaching on some children as they could not afford it; most of the families had one meal per day and some children could come to school without taking breakfast. The preschools managed under County Government did not charge school fees while those that were privately owned charged school fees ranging from 5000-20000 per term depending on the status of the school.

Regarding performance, the study revealed that 58.3% of preschool children repeated their classes due 87.5% poor performance and 12.5% too young to proceed to the next class. The study also established through interviews that older children who were enrolled late felt out of place with rest thereby affecting their performance in class as established from the class merit list. Due differences in age, some pupils were said to be indiscipline and disobedient in class and could run away from class especially when they realize they could face disciplinary actions for wrong doing. It was established that 75.0% of the children faced numerous challenges which included lack of basic needs like lack of food due to poverty since most of them would not manage to carry some snack to school where the school did not have a feeding programme. The pupils scored an average of 305 marks against a possible 500 in the first exam, 246 marks in the second, 228 marks in the third exam and 256 marks in the fourth exams. This shows that the general performance of children in the lower classes was slightly above average despite that 75.0% of the children live with both parents, 12.5% living with single parents and another 12.5% with other relatives who encouraged them to go to school.
5.3 Conclusion

Pre-school attendance contributes positively to a Child’s formal education growth and development. It is associated with increase in school readiness for primary school which is an important predictor of school achievement. Therefore pre-school attendance contributes positively to a Child’s formal education growth and development. It is associated with increase in school readiness for primary school which is an important predictor of school achievement and children who go through pre-school have a better chance for start of primary education and a chance for improvement later in life. Since age, sex, health and body size cannot be done away with then unnecessary activities like long distance to ECD centers can be done away with. As children walk for long distances to ECD centers they use a lot of energy and consequently they may not have adequate nutrients for other developments. Children who go through pre-school have a better chance for start of primary education and a chance for improvement later in life.

Most families had one meal per day and some children went to school without breakfast. According to Sapan and Drogan (1994), when food taken is inadequate, learning I ranked last as survival is ranked first. Lack of enough food in Mukogondo division may have adverse effect in children behavior and cognitive development and learning since the little food taken would be used by the body to produce energy required to cover the long distance to pre-school.

Pre-school attendance contributes positively to child’s formal education growth and development and is associated with school readiness for primary school and an important predictor of school achievement. Children who go through pre-school have better chance to start primary education and improvement later in life. The research finding in
Mukogondo division, Laikipia North sub-county Laikipia County shows that pupils attended classes regularly. Others dropped out of school due to lack of interest in schooling, grown older and could not cope with poverty. Missing of the kindergarten and first grade years translate into weaker reading skills and grade repetition according to applied survey research, this could have led to poor performance.

The study also concludes that some children especially those living with grandparents started schooling late in life since they don’t have someone to escort them to school.

Learning is more evident when it begins early in life and the learning environment should be good with enough safe physical space (Heckman, 2000 Pg. 1950). The research concluded that the average age of pre-school children in the area was 5 years with the youngest being 3 years old and the oldest being 7 years old. This age is far above the recommended age of three years and therefore the learning would not be ardent.

There was poor academic performance in this area since pupils join school at the age far above the recommended age hence in the process lack interest. Long distance also make them lack interest hence poor performance.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on study findings, the following are policy recommendations:

i. To mitigate against the challenges that may affect the learning programs due to distance, the schools are encouraged to engage in school feeding programme so that children from poor families can concentrate in studying without worries. They can involve community members and parents to contribute some amount so that children can eat from school.
ii. Attention of all the stakeholders should be put in place to critically address challenges related to issues of access, equity, quality and relevance of ECDE programs.

iii. The government of Kenya should build many schools in this area so as the pupils can get to access to schools near them.

iv. Parents and communities should cooperate with the other stakeholders to address this challenge of long distance so that the children can attend school at appropriate age.

v. The government should sensitize parents on the importance of their children starting school at appropriate age so that parents can look for ways to make sure children go to school.

5.5 Recommendations for Further Research

The following were suggested for further research; It is necessary to carry out a similar study in the upper primary institutions to establish if the trend is similar to lower primary schools. Similar study to be done in other districts and other counties where no such studies have been undertaken. A study on how to peg challenges of distance to the pre-school centres on regional poverty index could also add to this body of knowledge due to poverty.
REFERENCES


Forget-Dubois, Nadine (2007). Predicting early school achievement with the EDI: A longitudinal population-based study. Early Education and Development 18.3


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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PRE-SCHOOL TEACHERS

My name is EDITH .N. WANGOMBE. I am completing a research study from Kenyatta University. The purpose of this study is to examine the effect of distance on pre-school attendance and overall performance at primary level. Please answer the questions in the space provided. DO NOT include your name on the questionnaire. Your responses will be anonymous and will never be linked to you personally. Thank you for your cooperation.

1. Gender

   Male  ( )  Female  ( )

2. What is the level of your education

   Basic ( )  Ordinary ( )  Diploma ( )  Graduate ( )
   No formal education ( )

3. Do you have any professional training in Early Childhood Education?

   Yes ( )  No ( )

4. If yes what is the training?

   i.  Certificate in Early Childhood Education ( )
   ii. Diploma in Early Childhood Education ( )
   iii. Degree in Early Childhood Education ( )
   iv. Masters in Early Childhood Education ( )
   v. Any other (specify)______________________________________________

5. How long have you been an ECDE teacher?
i. One year and below ( )
ii. 2 years ( )
iii. 3 years ( )
iv. 4 years ( )
v. Above 5 years ( )

6. How many classes do you have and what is the enrolment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>boys</th>
<th>girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baby class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Have some dropped out of school?

Yes ( )
No ( )

b) If yes what are the reasons?

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8. Does the school have a school feeding program?

Yes ( )
No ( )
b) If no are the children allowed to carry snacks to school?

Yes ( )  No ( )

ii) If yes do all children carry? Why?

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………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………

9. Do you charge the parents any fee?

b) If yes how much

c) Do all parents manage to pay?

Yes ( )  No ( )

d) Do they drop from pre-school due to fees?

Yes ( )  No ( )

10. Does the distance from home to pre-school affect

i) Pre-school attendance

Yes ( )  No ( )

Explain ____________________________________________________________
i) School entry age

Yes ( ) No ( )

Explain

iii) Enrolment

Yes ( ) No ( )

11. How many days has the child missed school this term? ( )

b. Reasons

i) .....................................................................................................................

ii) ......................................................................................................................

iii) .....................................................................................................................

12. Who caters for needs of the child?

   Parent ( ) Guardian ( ) Well wishers ( )

13. Has the child repeated in any class

Yes No

B. If yes why/

   Poor performance ( ) Too young to proceed ( ) Parents request ( )
14. What would you say about the Childs’ discipline and interaction with others?

……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

15. Does the child have other challenges that have affected his/her performance and school attendance?

Yes (      )                                     No (     )

B. If yes which challenges?

i).................................................................................................................................

ii).................................................................................................................................

iii)............................................................................................................................... 

16. Has any child dropped out of pre-school?

B. If yes why

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………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
APPENDIX II

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR LOWER PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

My name is EDITH .N. WANGOMBE. I am completing a research study from Kenyatta University. The purpose of this study is to examine the effect of distance on pre-school attendance and overall performance at primary level. Please answer the questions in the space provided. DO NOT include your name on the questionnaire. Your responses will be anonymous and will never be linked to you personally. Thank you for your cooperation

PART 1 Class teachers’ background information

1) What is your gender?
   Male (  )       Female (  )

2) What is your professional qualification?
   A) P1 certificate (  )
   B) Diploma (  )
   C) Degree (  )
   D) Masters (  )

3) What is your teaching experience in terms of years?
   1) Less than 1yr (  )
   2) 1-5yrs (  )
   3) 6-19yrs (  )
   4) Above 10yrs (  )
13. What would you say about the students’ performance?

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...........................................................................................................................
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14. What would you attribute the performance to?

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15. What are the main challenges experienced by the pupil?

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...........................................................................................................................
...........................................................................................................................

16. How often does the child miss school?

        Often (  )          Rarely (  )

17. What are the main reasons why the child misses school?

...........................................................................................................................
...........................................................................................................................
...........................................................................................................................

18. What would you say about the discipline of the pupil?

...........................................................................................................................
19 Does the child interact freely with others?

b) If no how does he/she behave?

20 In your own opinion do children who have attended pre-school perform better than those who did not attend?

B If yes why do you think this happens?

21 Have you had cases of dropouts?

B If yes what are the main reasons why the children dropout?
APPENDIX III

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PRE-SCHOOL PUPILS AND LOWER PRIMARY PUPILS

1. What is your gender?

   Boy ( )                      Girl ( )

2. What is your age ( )

3. Location of the pre-school center  Rural ( )                      Urban ( )

4. Class

   Baby class ( )              Middle class ( )                  Pre-unit ( )

   Class one ( )               Class two ( )                    Class three ( )

5. Average distance covered by the child from home to school

   1) Below 1 km ( )

   2) Between 1-2 km ( )

   3) Beyond 2km ( )

6. Who caters for your needs?

   Parent ( )                   Guardian ( )                      Well wishers ( )

7. Have you ever repeated in any class

   Yes                       No

   B. If yes why?__________________________________________________________

8. What challenges affects your performance and school attendance?
i) ........................................................................................................................................

ii) ......................................................................................................................................

iii) .......................................................................................................................................
APPENDIX IV

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR SUB-COUNTY OFFICERS

My name is EDITH .N. WANGOMBE. I am completing a research study from the Kenyatta University. The purpose of this study is to examine the effect of distance on pre-attendance and overall performance at primary level. The researcher will ask you some questions about pre-schools in your sub county. Your responses will be anonymous and will never be linked to you personally. Thank you in advance.

1) What would you say about enrolment in pre-schools in your area?
_______________________________________________________________

2) What would you attribute this enrolment to?
_______________________________________________________________

3) What is the average school entry age of pre-school pupils in your region?

4) What would you attribute this age to?
_______________________________________________________________

5) What are the main challenges experienced by:

   E) Pre-school teachers

      __________________________________________________________

      __________________________________________________________

   F) Pre-school children

      __________________________________________________________

      __________________________________________________________
APPENDIX V: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION LETTER FROM GRADUATE SCHOOL

KENYATTA UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL

E-mail: dean-graduate@ku.ac.ke
Website: www.ku.ac.ke

Our Ref: E55/PT/NKI/23863/2012
DATE: 13th January, 2017

Director General,
National Commission for Science, Technology
and Innovation
P.O. Box 30623-00100
NAIROBI

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION FOR EDITH NJERI WANG’OMBE – REG. NO.
E55/PT/NKI/23863/2012

I write to introduce Ms. Edith Wang’ombe who is a Postgraduate Student of this University. She is registered for MED degree programme in the Department of Early Childhood Studies.

Ms. Wang’ombe intends to conduct research for a MED Project Proposal entitled, “The Impact on Lower Primary Education By The Challenges of Distance to The Pre-School Centres in Mukogodo Division Laikipia County, Kenya”.

Any assistance given will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully,

MRS. LUCY N. MBAABU
FOR: DEAN, GRADUATE SCHOOL

GK/awm
APPENDIX VI: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION FROM MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Edith Njeri Wang’ombe,
Kenyatta University,
P.O. Box 43844 – 00100,
NAIROBI.

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION – EDITH NJERI WANG’OMBE


Following your application for authority to carry out research on "The impact on lower primary education by the challenges of distance to the pre-school centres in Mukogodo Division, Laikipia County, Kenya" I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in Laikipia County for a period ending 9th March, 2018.

Give a copy of your research to this office after completion of your work.

JOHN G. THIRINGI,
FOR: COUNTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION,
LAIKIPIA COUNTY.

C.C.
National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation,
NAIROBI.

The County Commissioner,
LAIKIPIA COUNTY.
Edith Njeri Wangombe  
Kenyatta University  
P.O. Box 43844-00100  
NAIROBI.

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to carry out research on “The impact on lower primary education by the challenges of distance to the pre-school centres in Mukogodo Division Laikipia County, Kenya,” I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in Laikipia County for the period ending 9th March, 2018.

You are advised to report to the County Commissioner and the County Director of Education, Laikipia County before embarking on the research project.

On completion of the research, you are expected to submit two hard copies and one soft copy in pdf of the research report/thesis to our office.

DR. STEPHEN K. KIBIRU, PhD.  
FOR: DIRECTOR-GENERAL/CEO

Copy to:

The County Commissioner  
Laikipia County.

The County Director of Education  
Laikipia County.
APPENDIX VIII: RESEARCH PERMIT

CONDITIONS

1. You must report to the County Commissioner and the County Education Officer of the area before embarking on your research. Failure to do so may lead to the cancellation of your permit.
2. Government Officer will not be interviewed without prior arrangement.
3. No questionnaires will be used unless it has been approved.
4. All interviews, screening and collection of biographical information are subject to further permission from the relevant Government Ministries.
5. You are required to submit a hard copy and one (1) soft copy of your final report.
6. The Government of Kenya reserves the right to terminate the conditions of this permit including its cancellation without notice.

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:

ME. EUDITH NERI WAAGOMBE of KEMBIA UNIVERSITY, 1658-10400 has been permitted to conduct research in Laikipia County on the topic: THE IMPACT ON LOWER PRIMARY EDUCATION BY THE CHALLENGES OF DISTANCE TO THE PRE-SCHOOL CENTRES IN MUKOOGO DIVISION LAIKIPIA COUNTY, KENYA.

For the period ending: 5th March, 2018

Authorised Signature

Applicant’s Signature

Director General
National Commission for Science, Technology & Innovation

Serial No. A 13151

CONDITIONS: see back page.