AN ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTS OF CHILD FRIENDLY SCHOOLS ON LEARNERS’ PERFORMANCE IN SELECTED PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN LONDANI SUB-COUNTY, KERICHO COUNTY, KENYA

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Introduction

- Children face negative conditions not only in school, home and community but environment can also pose challenges that make it difficult for children to enroll in schools and attend regularly,
- Food and water insecurity, under nutrition, parasitic infestations, unhygienic surroundings, chronic poverty, household chores, harmful traditional beliefs and practices, domestic overcrowding, gender discrimination, and HIV/AIDS, domestic violence are some of the factors that can wreak havoc with child’s right to attend and complete school.
- Schools must therefore focus on the whole child, which means taking into account conditions in the family or community that might be hindering his/her educational progress. (UNICEF, 2010)
Introduction cont.

- According to the Kenya Ministry of Education Science and Technology (2010) there are many obstacles of achieving quality education for all in Kenya. Today, only 50-60% of Kenya’s pupils who enter primary schools complete their eight years of basic education and of those who finish, only half qualify for admission into secondary schools (UNICEF, Kenya 2008).

- It was worth noting that the Kenyan child has been exposed to varied economic, social, cultural and political circumstances most of which are drawbacks to their wellbeing. Every child however, has a right to special protection yet it is very clear that schools operate within strained economic contexts.
Statement of the problem

• The role played by the school environment in performance of children had not been systematically investigated and documented. From the literature reviewed a gap is clearly indicated between policy on paper and the actual situation in schools.

• Children were undergoing a number of challenges in their struggle to access quality education in schools. Some schools in Londiani Sub County were hit by 2007/2008 post election violence which rendered schools unattractive and others destroyed.
Some of the children were displaced and have been subjected to abject poverty.

Child Friendly schools contribute towards the engineering of national and international targets and commitments of vision 2030, the millennium development goals, that emphasize the achievement of UPE and EFA, the improving of quality education, elimination of gender disparity in schools and the promotion of human rights (UNICEF, 2010, MOEST, 2010)
Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to assess the effects of child friendly schools on learners’ performance in selected Public Primary schools in Londiani Sub-county Kericho County.

Objectives of the Study

- To identify child friendly schools among Public Primary school in Londiani Sub-county
- To determine the effect of inclusive learning on learners’ performance among Public Primary school in Londiani Sub-county
- To identify the effect of gender equity and equality on learners’ performance in Public Primary Schools in Londiani Sub County.
The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The study was carried out in Londiani Sub-County, Kericho County. Questionnaires and interviews were used as methods for data collection. The target population comprised of 40 Head teachers, 300 teachers, and 14400 pupils.

Purposive sampling technique was used to select 40 public primary schools but selected 30% randomly to yield 12 schools. A school was the unit of sampling where simple random sampling technique was employed to select head teachers, teachers and pupils.

All head teachers from the 12 schools were selected purposively with the assumption that all schools contain 300 pupils 30% were selected randomly to yield 90 teachers and 306 pupils using the Krejcie and Morgan(1970) table.
Effect of Inclusive learning on learners’ performance

- Most of the respondents 83.33% strongly agreed that their school did not exclude, discriminate, or stereotype on the basis of difference their learners which enhanced their performance, 16.67% disagreed. Mariam (2010) stated that child friendly schools’ performances were good because they have put in place policies which did not exclude, discriminate or stereotype on the basis of differences of their learners.

- Majority 75% of the respondents strongly agreed that their schools respected diversity and ensured equality of learning for all children, 8.33% agreed and a few 16.67% disagreed.

- On the school providing education that is free and compulsory, affordable and accessible, especially to families and children at risk, all the respondents 100% strongly agreed. This could be because the schools visited were public schools which offer free primary education.
Effect of Inclusive learning on learners’ performance cont.

- Majority 83.33% of the teachers strongly agreed that their schools promoted good quality teaching and learning processes with individualized instruction which led to good performance, 8.33% agreed and the same number 8.33% disagreed. This is in agreement with UNICEF (2006) framework which state that CFS promote quality teaching and learning processes that include gender sensitive, individualized instruction, and support the abilities of teachers to apply active, cooperative and democratic learning methods.

- Most of the schools provided positive experiences for children, which enhanced the good performance as was seen by 91.67% of the responses who strongly agreed and only 8.33% disagreed.

- Majority 83.33% of the respondents said they provided structured content and good quality materials and resources in their schools while only 8.33% disagreed.

- Majority 91.67% of the respondents strongly agreed that their schools were child-centred hence promoted child participation in all aspects of school activities while only 8.33% disagreed.
Effect of gender equity and equality on learners’ performance

- Majority 91.67% agreed that their schools had measures and policies that promoted gender equality in enrolment and achievement of the pupils while only 8.33% disagreed. According to UNICEF, underachievement is inextricably linked to notions of gender and power (UNICEF 2003).

- Majority of the schools said they had taken measures to eliminate gender stereotypes in their schools. This was shown by a 91.67% yes response while only 8.33% disagreed.

- According to the UNICEF (2006) Framework, a child friendly school should have gender equity and equality of learners hence it should guarantee girl friendly facilities, curricula, textbooks and teaching learning process. The responses show that all respondents 100% gave a positive response on the availability of policies that guaranteed girl friendly facilities, curricula, textbooks and teaching learning processes. The findings show that 95.83% of the schools encouraged respect for each others' rights, dignity and equality while only 4.17% did not.
Conclusion

- The environment in most primary schools selected was partially conducive to teaching and learning activities.
- On inclusive learning, some facilities were not friendly to learners with impairment. It was concluded that the infrastructural facilities such as toilet facilities and library were adequately available in the schools although not disability friendly.
- The classroom environment was however, found to be friendly to children with disabilities. The classroom is a critical focus in the total school environment and has a powerful influence on how well a child develops and learns. The classroom environment should be attractive to the children. In view of the fact that school environment is significantly related to children learning, everything possible must be done to make the schools child friendly.
- Equality in relation to access to education was observed, in fact all schools had attained gender parity in as far as enrollment and retention was concerned. However, children from marginalized areas had to walk for long distances to access education facilities.
Recommendations

- There should be collaborative effort among all education stakeholders to continue providing necessary infrastructure and personnel that will make Kenyan primary schools learner friendly.

- All Education stakeholders should ensure that teaching/learning resources are adequately provided and safety precautions in schools be improved so that pupils can perform well.

- Head teachers to create healthy and constructive interpersonal relationships among parents and school community members in order to improve performance.

- The Government to increase budgetary allocation to primary education to cater for marginalized children from poor backgrounds to enhance equity in accessibility to education.