

**FACTORS INFLUENCING TRANSITION OF PUPILS' FROM
PRIMARY TO SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MERU CENTRAL
DISTRICT IN KENYA**

BY

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DECLARATION

This is my original work and has not been submitted for award of degree in any other University

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my wife Gladys N. Muthuri and children Shem Murithi, Sharlen Kanana, and Christine Muthoni.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

EFA-Education for all

FGM- Female genital mutilations

FPE-Free primary Education

GER-Gross Enrolment Ratio

GOK-Government of Kenya

K.C.P.E-Kenya certificate of primary Education

KIPPRA-Kenya institute for public policy Research and analysis

LAC-Latin American countries

MDG-Millennium development goals

MoE-Ministry of Education

NER-Net Enrolment Ratios

SSA-Sub-Saharan Africa

UPPA-Uganda Participatory poverty Assessment

UNICEF-United Nations International Children Educational Fund

UNESCO-United Nations Educational and Socio Cultural Organization

VSLA-Village Savings and Loans Associations

ABSTRACT

The study was on factors influencing transition of pupils' from primary to secondary schools in Meru central district in Kenya. Education is a fundamental human right because it empowers individuals with the knowledge and skills needed to increase production and income, as well as enabling individuals take advantage of employment opportunities in order to reduce poverty. It is one of the smartest economic and human development investments that any country can make. Secondary education plays a vital role in ensuring a country's development through training, as pre-requisites to economic growth and Social development. Transition from one level of education to another has been affected by various factors which include academic performance at the end of each grade, education level of parents, tuition fees charged by secondary schools when joining form one and availability of vacancies in the next level. Secondary school enrolments in Sub-Saharan Africa continued to be the lowest in the world. The study wanted to find out why the secondary school enrolments do not match the primary school enrolments.

The study was guided by the following objectives; to establish how academic performance of pupils' at Kenya certificate of primary education (K.C.P.E), influences transition from primary to secondary schools ,to determine the relationship between education level of parents and transition of pupils' from primary to secondary schools, to establish how tuition fees charged students' when joining form one affects transition of pupils' from primary to secondary schools and to determine how availability of form one vacancies in secondary schools, affects transition of pupils' from primary to secondary schools in Meru central district. The second chapter looked at literature review on how those variables have influenced transition in other parts of the world, theoretical framework and conceptual framework. The study was based on systems theory that was originally proposed by a biologist Ludwing von Bertalanffy in 1928who said that a system is a self- contained unit, and a part of a wider higher order, and is organized in a series such that the output of one, is the input for another subsystem, therefore, alteration of part requires alterations in other sub-subsystems.

The study used descriptive survey design because it administered questionnaires and interviewed people. It targeted 25 schools and 25 members of school committees in the district. Questionnaires were issued and interview schedules conducted with school committees and data was analyzed using spss. Chapter four looked at data analysis and used tables and charts, to present information. The study concluded that the district was performing poorly in KCPE, education level of parents was affecting transition, tuition fees was hindering students transition to secondary schools and limited vacancies in secondary schools was influencing transition of pupils from primary to secondary schools in the district. The study made recommendations that should be put in place in order to improve transition levels in the district that government should provide qualified teaching personnel to meet the needs of learners in order to improve KCPE performance, District Education office should come up with practical

measures to sensitize the parents on the importance of education in order to change their attitudes and efforts should be made to ensure even distribution of secondary schools with relevant and adequate infrastructures.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

Education is a fundamental human right because it empowers individuals with the knowledge and skills needed to increase production and income, as well as enabling individuals take advantage of employment opportunities in order to reduce poverty (UNESCO, 2010). Supporting education is one of the smartest economic and human development investments that any country can make (World Bank, 2009). Secondary education plays a vital role in ensuring that a country's development through training, are pre-requisites to economic growth and Social development (World Bank, 2008). This is why governments all over the world are committed to the provision of education to their citizens.

The Republic of Korea, which in the 1950s was among the world's poorest countries, managed to achieve nearly 100% transition in secondary education in just four decades. This rapid expansion was attributed to a pragmatic policy framework emphasizing different levels of education overtime. In the 1960s, the top priority was universal primary education; in the 1970s policy emphasis shifted to secondary education, and in 1980s, to the tertiary level. In 1968, the government abolished the entrance examination for middle schools, increased government spending in education, and encouraged private provision of

education at all levels. Korea's success story provides a vital lesson for African governments on how political commitment and pragmatic education planning can turn around an education system (APHRC, 2007).

In order for countries to develop and compete well in a globalized economy, it is important for labor markets to have high caliber of school graduates with relevant skills and knowledge. Secondary education is very important for many individuals, because it improves their standards of living when they get jobs, and determines their future life chance and mobility out of poverty (Lewin, 2007). Transition to secondary education is beneficial in more than economic and social development because it promotes active citizenship as well as enhances social cohesion by increasing trust and tolerance amongst individuals (World Bank, 2005)

According to universal declaration of Human Rights Article 28 of 1979, education should be free at least at the elementary level and accessible to all on basis of merit at higher levels. In order to realize these aspirations, the united Nations introduced the Education for All (EFA) as an international initiative first launched in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990 to bring the benefits of education to every citizen in every society (EFA Global monitoring Report UNESCO, 2009). Education is a major catalyst for human development hence its accessibility is very important. Access to schooling in developing countries

has improved since 1990 some 47 out of 163 countries have achieved universal primary education (MDG 2) and an additional 20 countries are estimated to be on track to achieve this goal by 2015. However, challenges on transition remain in 44 countries, 23 of which are in Sub-Saharan Africa, and Kenya is among them (World Bank, 2009).

In Latin America, Brazil has the highest secondary gross enrolment ratios at almost 100% compared to Guatemala where only 51% of students enroll beyond primary education. Only a handful of Sub-Saharan African countries, such as Botswana, Cape Verde, Mauritius and South Africa, have achieved rates of access to secondary education as high as 80% for junior secondary while Kenyan transition levels currently stands at around 73%. Countries such as Burundi, Burkina Faso, and Rwanda have not even achieved rates of 20% (SEIA, 2007). Secondary education is important because it provides students with the technical, academic and life skills to contribute to the economic prosperity of their countries yet, transition to secondary education remains low throughout the developing world with stark regional differences especially in Africa (World Bank, 2005).

The attainment of EFA by 2015 is a major commitment of the Government of Kenya, in line with the right to education for all Kenyans as it is enshrined in the Constitution of Kenya (2010). Access to education in Kenya has not

been evenly distributed across sexes, regions and social groups (Orodho, 2002). According to EFA monitoring Report (2012), Kenya is one of the countries where the secondary enrollment has significantly increased together with Burkina Faso, Burundi, Chad, Congo, Niger, Tanzania among others.

Financing secondary education is a great challenge to both governments and households. Secondary education in most African countries tends to be the most neglected, receiving on average 15-20% of state resources. In Kenya, whereas households meet only 20% of primary and 8% of university education costs, they shoulder 60% of secondary education costs. Thus, tuition fee is a key barrier to transition to secondary school for the poor, who form the majority in sub-Saharan Africa (APHRC, 2007). According to World Bank (2008), Tanzania is one of the poorest countries of the world; hence parents are unable to pay tuition fees for their children in schools.

It is generally agreed by scholars that the most important manifestations of schooling quality (however defined) are literacy, greater cognitive abilities and better student performance in examinations. Internationally, pupils' scores have been accepted and used as a proxy of achievement. This performance is important to transition to secondary schools in many countries of the world (UNESCO 2004; Deolalikar, 1999). In Eritrea, transition to secondary school is very low because many pupils repeat primary school due to poor performance in

final examinations (World Bank, 2008). In Kenya, good performance at KCPE Examination enhances pupil's transition to good public secondary schools.

According to Ngware et al (2006), transition from primary to secondary school in Kenya is usually pegged on the number of available spaces in secondary schools. According to World Bank, (2008) Senegal secondary education enrolls only 25 percent of the student who complete primary cycle to lower secondary education due to the limited number of schools; hence about half of the pupils completing primary schools lack opportunities to enroll in secondary education. In addition, secondary schools are unevenly distributed making it more difficult to access secondary education in some areas.

According to World Bank, (2008) Namibia has primary schools spread over rural areas, while secondary schools are concentrated in towns and cities, and this hinders transition of pupils from interior parts of the country. Parents' level of education may be positively correlated with student ability, which may in turn result into higher education attainment for the child. Moreover educated parents are likely to provide a more conducive learning environment for their children at home and also encourage their transition to secondary schools (Ngware et al, 2006). Where parents have low levels of education, they may not see the need to encourage their children to transit to secondary schools. Table 1.1 shows that transition from primary to secondary schools in Kenya has been increasing gradually over the years.

Table 1.1: Transition from primary to secondary schools in Kenya from 2003-2011

Years	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Transition Rates	46.4 %	45.8 %	56.0 %	56.3 %	59.6 %	59.9 %	66.9 %	72.5 %	73.3 %

Source : MoE, 2012.

Table 1.1 shows the progression in transition of pupils' from primary schools to secondary schools in Kenya since 2003. Progression of learners from one level of education to another is a measure of a system's internal efficiency as well as its physical capacity (Otieno & Colcloughn 2009). However, transition from primary to secondary schools in Meru central has remained low over the years. It is in the interest of this study to find out the factors that influence transition of pupils from primary to secondary schools in Meru central district.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Secondary school enrolments in Sub-Saharan Africa continue to be the lowest in the world. Of approximately 104 million secondary school-age children in the region, only one in four (25%) were enrolled in secondary school in 2006

(UNESCO, 2008). The world average on secondary NERs shows that slightly more than half (58%) of the secondary school-age children were enrolled in secondary schools in 2006 (*ibid*, 2008). Statistics provided by UNESCO (2008) show that children, in SSA have the lowest opportunity to enroll in secondary school at their official age. In Kenya education at primary level, as a result of the introduction of universal primary education net enrolment rates are 81.5%, while net enrolment at secondary school is 69.1% despite the government's efforts of introducing free day secondary schools in 2008,(EFA Global Monitoring, 2010).

The transition from primary to secondary schools in Meru central district has remained low over the years as shown in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2: Comparisons of transition from primary to secondary schools

YEARS	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
National	59.6%	59.9%	66.9%	72.5%	73.3%
M/ central	37.8%	39.3%	38.6%	39.1%	38.3%

Source: MoE (2012) and DEO Meru Central: 2012.

This trend has persisted and has been raising concern of educationists. For instant in 2011, 38.3% of the pupils who sat KCPE joined secondary schools. This left out over 60% whose continuity in education could not be explained (Meru central district education office, 2012).There could be a host of factors

that are responsible for this transition gap. It was therefore in the interest of this study to establish the factors that influence transition from primary to secondary schools in Meru central District

1.3 Purpose of study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the factors that influence transition of pupils' from primary to secondary schools in Meru central district in Kenya.

1.4 Objectives of the study

The following specific objectives guided the study:

- i. To establish how academic performance of pupils' at Kenya certificate of primary education (K.C.P.E), influences transition from primary to secondary schools in Meru Central district.
- ii. To determine the relationship between education level of parents and transition of pupils' from primary to secondary schools in Meru central district.
- iii. To establish how tuition fees charged students' when joining form one affects transition of pupils' from primary to secondary schools in Meru central district.
- iv. To determine how availability of form one vacancies in secondary schools, affects transition of pupils' from primary to secondary schools in Meru central district.

1.5 Questions of the study

The study attempted to answer the following questions:

- i. What is the relationship between academic achievement in Kenya certificate of primary education and, transition of pupils' from primary to secondary schools in Meru Central District?
- ii. Does the highest level of education of parents influence transition of pupils' from primary to secondary schools in Meru central district?
- iii. To establish how the tuition fees charged students' when joining form one affects transition of pupils' from primary to secondary schools in Meru central district?
- iv. Explain how availability of form one vacancies in secondary schools, affects transition of pupils' from primary to secondary schools in Meru Central District?

1.6 Significance of the study

The research provides up to date information on current factors influencing transition's in Meru central district. This information may be useful to educational planners, administrators, parents, pupils, donors, community, and other stakeholders, to device measures that could ensure that student join secondary schools after completing primary school cycle. The ministry of education can use findings of this study to address factors that hinder transition even in other parts of the country. Moreover this study adds to

the growth of knowledge on the factors that influence transition of pupils from primary to secondary schools. The educational administrators can address the problems that pupils experience when transiting to secondary schools and influence their participation in secondary education. The findings of this study can be used as a basis of research in other parts of the country.

1.7 Limitations of the study

In this study it was not possible to control the attitudes of the respondents which may affect the validity of the responses. This is because respondents may give socially acceptable answers to please the researcher. During the study it was not possible to adequately measure the factors that influence students transition to secondary schools, because there were factors that influenced student transition which were beyond the scope of the study.

Some respondents were afraid to reveal information they considered intimate to them. The study did not involve dropouts though they are best placed to reveal the reasons that hindered them from transiting to secondary schools, because it was difficult to find them.

1.8 Delimitations of the study

The study covered only 124 primary schools in Meru Central District, in the Meru County in Kenya. The study considered the views of head teachers of those pupils who dropped out after standard eight, and the views school committees. The generalizations made in this study only applies to Meru central district and can be replicated in other districts with

similar characteristics. The study focused on specific factors influencing transition to secondary schools which included; performance at Kenya certificate of primary education, Education level of parents, tuitions fees required when joining form one and availability of form one vacancies in secondary schools.

1.9 Basic assumptions of the study

- i) The study assumed that the sampled schools experienced low transitions of pupils from primary to secondary schools, in the district.
- ii) It is also assumed that the data obtained from the respondents was accurate and formed the basis of the findings of this study.

1.10 Definition of significant terms

Access refers to the right of entry, admission to secondary school.

Enrolment refers to the number of students' registered in a school at a given time

Drop out refers to a person who leaves school after completing the designated eight years of primary school cycle and does not proceed to secondary school.

Influence refers to the capacity to have an effect on the character, development, or behavior of someone or something.

Participation refers to taking part in school or being in the school

Pupil's background refers to home based factors affecting transition of a pupil from primary school to secondary school.

Secondary education refers to the stage of education after completing primary school. In Kenya, it is generally the final stage of ordinary education level (O-Level).

Transition refers to moving from primary school to secondary school.

1.11 Organization of the study

The study is organized into five chapters. Chapter one presents the background of the problem, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, limitations of the study, delimitation, basic assumptions of the study, definition of significant terms and organization of the study. Chapter two deals with review of related literature on factors influencing transition like Academic performance at Kenya certificate of primary education, Education level of parents, tuition fees required when joining form one and availability of form one vacancies. It also has a theoretical and conceptual framework. Chapter three deals with research methodology which includes research design, target population, sample sizes and sampling techniques, research instruments, the data collection procedures and data analysis techniques. Chapter four presents the data analysis, and

interpretations, and discussions on the findings. Chapter five contains the summary of the findings, conclusions and recommendat

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This section reviewed the factors influencing transition of pupils from primary to secondary schools which includes; Academic performance at Kenya certificate of primary education, Education level of parents, tuition fees charged pupils when joining form one, and availability of form one vacancies in secondary schools. Lastly, it looks at the theoretical and conceptual framework.

2.2 Background of transition from primary to secondary

The improvement in transition from primary to secondary education in American, constituted a shift in education policy. The shift necessitated more investment in secondary school education by increasing public funding, non-selective with no early specialization or academic segregation, a practical curriculum, numerous small-fiscally independent school districts, and secular control of schools and school funds (World Bank, 2005).This decentralized nature of the US secondary school system increased access and transitions in to

secondary education (World Bank, 2005). However, Sweden and the UK had relatively high secondary school participation rates, though below 50 per cent (World Bank, 2005).

In Asian countries, public investments were made in primary and secondary education after the Second World War. For instance, Singapore and South Korea adopted policies aimed at increasing quality and access to secondary education. Yet such policies did not guarantee increased access to secondary education as participation rates in vocational secondary education remained below 50 per cent (Mundle, 1998; Gill et al., 2000; World Bank, 2005). However, countries such as Japan that took urgent measures to increase transition to secondary education through increased public investment are now enjoying economic benefits.

The education systems inherited by the African nations at the time of independence were quite inadequate to meet the needs of the new countries for self-governance and rapid economic growth. For example in 1960, the GER in primary schools in Sub-Saharan Africa was still only 36%, about half the levels then found in Asia (67%) and Latin America (73%). Many African countries, including the Gambia, Cote D'Voire, and Senegal in West Africa, Tanzania and Somalia in East Africa, had literacy rate below 10% at the time of independence, (World Bank, 1988). Enrollment rates in secondary schools among Sub-Saharan African countries vary between less than 10 and more than 90 percent, with Tanzania and South

Africa representing the extremes. Obviously, the Challenges of making transitions more efficient and equitable are accordingly different. In Low-participation countries, the main aim is to open up for increased enrollment, especially in lower secondary education (World Bank, 2008).

The belief that education holds the key in promoting social and economic progress played an important role in the growth and spread of education in Kenya mainly as a means of providing qualified persons for the growing economic and administrative institutions left behind by the colonial government (Court and Ghai,74). In addition several commissions were founded to address the challenges facing the education sector and to seek out a more responsive educational system; these included the commissioning of the Kenya Education Commission Report of 1964, the report proposed an education system that would foster national unity and African Socialism; the report of the national committee on education objectives and policies of 1976, the commission of higher education report that saw the removal of A-level and the adoption of 8.4.4 system in 1985, the Kamunge report of 1988, the Koech report of 2000 and more recent, the Sessional paper No 1 of 2005 on policy framework for education, training and research.

Secondary school education is characterized by dropout rates ranging from 10 to 50% and factors such as poverty, insecurity and geographical disparities have been attributed to this trend (Achoka et al, 2007). To mitigate against the low levels of transition from primary to secondary levels of education, Free

Secondary Education was introduced in 2008. This directive though, is limited in its capacity to ensure that all students have access to secondary education, its benefits are few. This aspect of low transition rates is quite common in Meru central district.

Kenya's educational system prior to independence was controlled by the colonial government and missionaries. Reading was introduced to spread Christianity and practical Subjects were meant to prepare the indigenous African communities for blue and technical jobs. The colonial education system was based on a model of segregation, this saw the establishment of separate educational systems for Europeans, Asians and Africans, a factor that perpetuated inequalities in accessing education more so for the African population. After independence in 1963, the African post-independent government sought to rectify the anomalies created by the colonial education structure through increasing opportunities for the Kenyan African population.

The Kenyan educational system has witnessed several changes in structure and in curriculum. In the prevailing 8-4-4 system, primary education is supposed to start at the age of 6 and run for 8 years. This is followed by 4 years of secondary education. Secondary education paves the way for higher education, which is imparted through technical institutes, polytechnics or universities. University education for most degrees is a 4-year program. The data collected in 1997 on the educational pyramid reveal that 44% of the working-age population had not completed primary school while 21% had attained at least 8 years of schooling, completing primary school. About 17% had begun but had not completed lower

secondary education (forms 1 and 2) while 13.7% had completed it. (Kimalu et al. 2001). This has made some scholars to view the current 8-4-4 system as being a wasteful system. Things have not changed even with the introduction of FPE in 2003, an initiative that has seen more children go to school. However, not all school going children have been able to access education. At secondary level, cost sharing which forces parents to pay for school uniform and utilities, has raised the cost of hiring teachers and recurrent and capital expenditure (GOK, 1999). Access to secondary school education still remains limited despite the rapid expansion of the sector only 47% of pupils securing entry into the secondary level; this percentage represents only 27% of those eligible for secondary education (GoK, 2003).

According to EFA monitoring Report (2012), Kenya is one of the countries where the secondary enrollment has significantly increased but has not matched the primary school enrolments which has pushed the demand for secondary education higher. In Kenya, it is estimated that the transition reached 60% in 2006/07. This suggests that six in every 10 children enrolled in the last grade of primary school in 2006 became enrolled in secondary school in 2007. There is a strong correlation between the increase in standard 8 enrolments and transition to secondary school. As the enrolment of primary pupils in the last grade increases, so does the number of pupils entering into the first grade of secondary education. This suggests that the increase of enrolments in the secondary sector also depends on the increase in pupils completing the last grade of primary education (Lewin, 2005). Despite the challenges

associated with it, transition to secondary education is beneficial in more than economic and social development because it promotes active citizenship as well as enhances social cohesion by increasing trust and tolerance amongst individuals (World Bank, 2005).

2.3 Academic performance of pupils at Kenya certificate of primary education

Kenya certificate of primary Education is a high-stakes examination, which has profound consequences for candidate's life chances. Kenyan secondary schools are formally stratified into a three-tier hierarchy on the basis of their catchment areas and KCPE results determine which tier candidates are entitled to enter (Kimalu, et al ,2001). National schools which are currently 78 in number forms the top tier. They are highly selective and only about 1% of KCPE candidates, recruited from all over the country will win these places. The national schools include among them the earliest secondary schools in the country, some dating back to the 1920s or 1930s. The KCPE performance level needed to qualify for a national school varies from district to district, and some national schools are more selective than others. In general, however, a total score of at least 380 (out of a maximum of 500) is required; often 400 or higher for the most prestigious schools (MOE, 2009).

Provincial schools form the middle tier. They recruit from within the province where the school is located. Provincial schools are moderately selective in that about 20% of KCPE candidates qualify. Recruitment requirements vary widely,

but for an established secondary school a KCPE score of at least 320 is likely to be needed (Kimalu, et al ,2001). District schools constitute the broad base of the secondary education pyramid such that the bottom of the status hierarchy they make up about 70% of all public secondary schools in Kenya. District schools may not have boarding facilities and as a result they recruit local pupils, living for the most part within walking distance hence most of them operate as day secondary schools. Some district schools set a minimum KCPE score for entry while others are virtually non-selective. It is clear, then, that for primary-school leavers with aspirations to continue their education, performance in the KCPE examination is crucial. One major initiative to improve performance in the years ahead is the recent launch of the Kenya Education Sector Support Program (KESSP) which will support the government in strengthening management and delivery of education services and improve access to and the quality and relevance of education and training GoK, (2007).

2.4 Education level of parents of pupils completing primary education

The parent's level of education has a lot of impact on schooling of children because the more educated parents are, the more likely they are to enroll their children and push them through school (Holmes, 2003). Parental decisions affect children retention in a school system such that students whose parents monitor and regulate their activities, provide emotional support, encourage independent decision making and are generally more involved in their schooling are less likely to drop out of school (UNICEF, 1999).

High academic attainment of a mother and father significantly reduce chances of primary school dropout for both girls and boys in rural and urban areas. For a mother, this phenomenon could perhaps be attributed to the fact that educated mothers reduce the time spent doing household chores while increasing the time spent with their children than their uneducated counterparts. Also, educated mothers are more effective in helping their children in academic work and also monitor and supervise their children's academic progress (Holmes, 2003). While for fathers, it's attributed to the fact that educated fathers are also interested in the academic progress of their children thus they would be willing to spend more time helping their children in academic problems.

As suggested by Leclercq (2001), educated parents are more aware of the possible returns to their children's education and they are more likely to have access to information and social networks necessary for their children to engage into relatively human capital intensive activities yielding high returns to education. This also goes a long way in motivating their children to aim higher in education because they can look at their parents as role models. Educated parents are likely to hire private tuition and offer rewards for their children so that they can do well in school. The academic attainment of parents enhances positive attitudinal change towards children's education. In Kenya, parents who are not educated or have just the basic education, do not see the benefits of education hence do not encourage their children to transit to high school (CREATE, 2009).

2.5 Tuition fees charged pupil's when joining form one class in secondary schools

Financial requirements for joining secondary school influences transition from primary to secondary schools and are one of the greatest challenges of access to secondary education in SSA. This is because secondary education in majority of the countries is part of a fee-paying sector. This means that parents are required to meet some operational costs such as tuition and maintenance fees and may be required to pay for many other things including food, uniforms, learning materials, and special equipment (Lewin, 2007). State investment in secondary education tends to be the most neglected of the education sector, receiving on average between 15% and 20% of total education resources from the government (World Bank, 2007). Such a low investment in secondary education has direct implications on transitions to secondary schools which is a challenge for many individuals particularly in rural regions of Africa, with many children unable to attend due to the remoteness of location of secondary schools.

In countries such as Kenya and Uganda which have introduced universal primary education there was necessary tradeoff between implementing this policy and investing in building new schools and improving school infrastructure (CREATE, 2007). Furthermore, even in secondary schools located near primary feeder schools, there may be other problems restricting the

intake of pupils. Underfinancing has led to inadequacy of teaching staff and classrooms, both of which pose major obstacles to many secondary schools enrolling more children. This makes schools to charge high fees in order to meet the cost of running secondary schools. Governments need to be prepared to invest in secondary education if they want to improve transition and subsequently see an increase in economic growth and social progress. Without such investment it will become increasingly hard to compete in today's knowledge based global economy (World Bank, 2008).

In Kenya before the introduction of subsidized secondary education households were expected to meet 60% of secondary education costs, compared to 20% of primary and 7% of university (World Bank, 2007). Even after the government moved to create free day secondary education system, the cost of education to households in Kenya continues to remain high for many to attend secondary school. A study of 109 school leavers found only 17 progressed to secondary school, while 20 of those who would have liked to attend sighted auxiliary costs as the greatest hurdle (Obua, 2011).

Initiatives such as the Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLA) have proved to be effective methods to increase incomes of some of the poorest families. An evaluation of VSLA groups in Uganda found that people were prepared to spend a significant amount of money on education if they could afford it and in fact spent more money on school fees than anything else (Anguria et al, 2008). This observation is also supported by case studies from

Build Africa's income program indicating that as household income increases so does spending on education. For transition to improve it is imperative that poor families are able to afford the cost of secondary education. Programs geared towards increasing incomes of the poor are therefore critical if access to and benefits of secondary education are to be extended more widely.

2.6 Availability of form one vacancies for pupils in secondary schools

A significant number of studies have observed the uneven distribution of educational opportunities between poor and non-poor regions, both in urban and rural environments. A lack of schools within a reasonable walking distance for those in poor regions is a serious barrier to transition, especially in rural and remote parts of countries (World Bank, 2007). A lack of infrastructure is also a serious challenge to existing schools and as the numbers of pupils completing primary education continues to grow, teaching staff amongst other resources will become an increasing problem (USAID, 2008). In addition the transition from primary to secondary schools in Kenya is pegged on the number of available spaces in secondary schools (Bedi *et al*, 2004). This results from the limited number of schools, in Kenya to absorb the pupils who are completing standard eight.

However according to research that has been carried out in Kenya, the number of secondary schools per square kilometer has a positive impact on access to secondary education (Alston and Kent, 2006). If physical

infrastructure exists at secondary school level, transition will increase to between 65% and 70% over the next 5 to 10 years. In order to meet the 70% transition rates by 2008 as envisioned by the government, about 12,000 new classrooms are required (Chimombo, 2005).

2.7 Summary of the literature reviewed

From the literature reviewed it is clear that in order for transition to be improved a number of issues have to be addressed at different levels by the government and the private sector, in order to address the barriers children face when transiting to secondary schools. The world average on secondary NERs shows that slightly more than half (58%) of the secondary school-age children were enrolled in secondary schools in 2006 (UNESCO, 2008). Statistics provided by UNESCO (2008) show that children, in SSA have the lowest opportunity to enroll in secondary school at their official age. In Kenya, primary schools net enrolment rates are 81.5%, after introduction of Universal primary education; while net enrolment at secondary school is 69.1% despite the government's efforts of introducing free day secondary schools in 2008, (EFA Global Monitoring, 2010).

New schools must be built and improvements to infrastructure and facilities of existing ones must be undertaken. At the primary school level it is imperative that everything is done to ensure that pupils perform well at KCPE. However,

not all school going children have been able to transit to secondary education in Kenya. CREATE (2009) detailed some of the factors responsible for transition trends which included; KCPE performance by pupil's at the primary school level, education level of the parents of these pupils, tuition fees, and availability of form one vacancies in secondary schools among others, as the biggest hindrance to transition to secondary education. Data from Meru Central District education office, shows that transition from primary to secondary schools in the district has remained low over the years, despite the growing concern, no studies have been carried out to establish the pertinent factors affecting transition to secondary schools in the district (Meru central district education office 2012). This study therefore sought to establish factors that influence transition from primary to secondary education in the district.

2.8 Theoretical framework

This study was based on systems theory that was originally proposed by a biologist Ludwing von Bertalanffy in in 1928. He said that a system can be broken down into individual components, which interact with others, and that the components could be added in a linear fashion to describe the totality of the system. He proposed that one part of the system enables us to know something about another part. A system can be controlled or non- controlled, and in a controlled system information is sensed, and changes are effected in response to the information. He further said that systems share general characteristics that enable them to function as systems regardless of their type or level and must

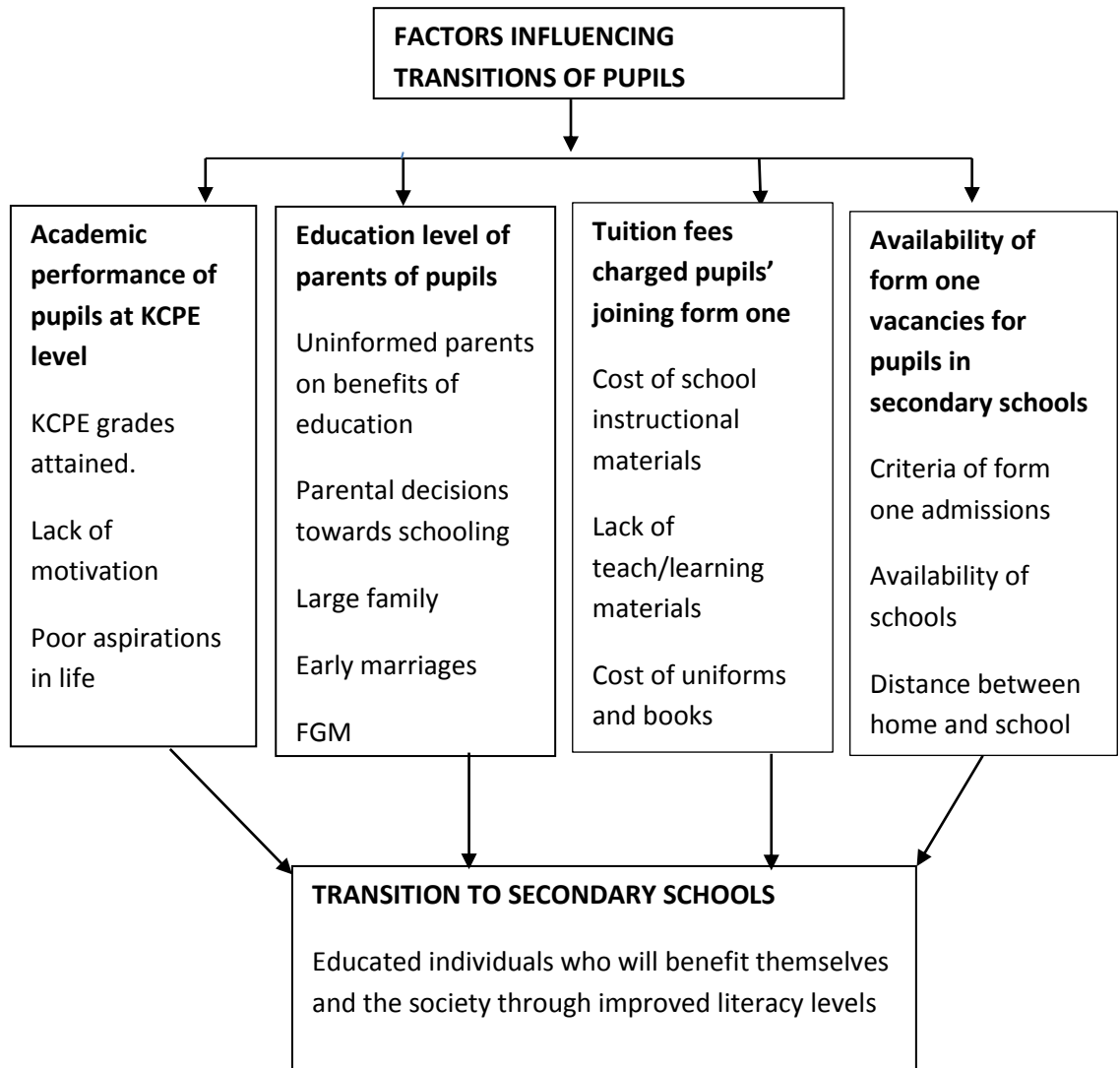
have ways of self-organizing and directing behavior as well as being purpose driven.

Though a system is a self-contained unit, it is part of a wider higher order, and is organized in a series such that the output of one is the input for another subsystem, therefore, alteration of part requires alterations in other subsystems. A system must be strongly goal directed, governed by feedback and have the ability to adapt to changing circumstances. This means that the output of primary school level is the input of the secondary school level because a school is a system. A system has some predictability and this is also similar to a school since those who enter standard one are expected to exit after standard eight. The functioning of a system is affected by its environment. Parents are key players and form part of the environment of an education system, because they influence or motivate the pupils to continue with school or not to, and they meet the cost of schooling for their children and especially when transiting to form one. A system is governed by feedback. The KCPE performance provides this feedback on how the system is fairing. A system is a self-contained unit, but part of a wider higher order. The primary schools are part of education system in Kenya. Secondary schools form part of the higher order in the system and have rules of admissions to their subsystem based on performance at the primary school level, availability of form one vacancies and charges (tuition fees) levied as a condition of admission. These are some of the factors that hinder transition of pupils from primary level to secondary school level of education.

According to Reigeluth, Bathany, and Olson (1993) a system is based on the following assumption in terms of design: A systems view suggests that essential quality of a part resides in its relationship to the whole. The systems design notion requires both coordination and integration. There is therefore need to design all parts operating at a specific system level of the organization interactively and simultaneously (Griffiths, 1964). This is because a system cannot operate in isolation. Education is an Open System if there is a continual input and output of both energy and matter in it. The environment is also made up of social, economic and political institutions, which are constantly interacting and inter-dependent and the same is true of the school system. Schmuck (1977), advanced that schools are essentially living systems and that without people they are nothing but concrete and paper. Hanson (1977), Owens (1981) and Obilade (1989), examined education as a process involving the following five forms of inputs: Human resources such as students; materials resources such as buildings, desks, books, equipment; financial resources such as money; constraints, such as requirements of the law and policy; expectations of parents, values and goals. The output or products of the educational system are students in the form of educated people now better equipped to serve themselves and society. Progression of learners from one level of education to another is a measure of a system's internal efficiency as well as its physical capacity.

2.9 Conceptual Framework

Fig 1.1 Factors influencing transition of pupils from primary to secondary schools



The conceptual framework relates independent variables to dependent variable. It considers variables that are of great influence to transition of pupils from primary to secondary schools and these have been treated as independent variables such as academic performance of pupils at Kenya certificate of primary education, education level of parents of these pupils, tuition fees

required when pupils are joining form one and availability of form one vacancies in secondary schools. The output or dependent variable is the transitions of pupils from primary to secondary schools and increased literacy levels in the society at large.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This section presents the methodology used to carry out the study. Specifically the chapter focuses on the research design, target population, sample and sampling techniques, research instruments, instruments validity, instrument reliability, data collection procedures, and data analysis techniques. The chapter also discusses how validity and reliability were established.

3.2 Research design

In this study a qualitative and quantitative techniques using descriptive survey research design were used. According to Orodho (2005) descriptive survey is a method of collecting information by interviewing and administering questionnaire to a sample of individuals. Therefore this method was chosen for this study because it enabled the use of questionnaires and interview schedules for collection of data on respondents' attitudes and opinions. Data was collected from the respondents in the sampled primary schools on their attitudes and opinions on factors affecting transition from primary to secondary schools in the district.

3.3 Target Population

The target population for this study consisted of head teachers from 124 primary schools and one committee official from those schools in Meru Central district.

3.4 Sample sizes and sampling techniques

According to Wiersma (1995), a sample is a small proportion of a target population that has been selected using some systematic procedures for the study. A sample is a smaller group obtained from the accessible population selected for study (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). Kothari (1985), states that by observing the characteristics of a carefully selected and representative sample, one can make certain inferences about characteristics of the population from which it is drawn. According to Gay (1992) & Sekaran (2007), a researcher can take samples of 10% of a bigger population and at least 20% for a smaller population and that a sample of above 30 to 500 is a good representation of the population. Mugenda & Mugenda (2003), suggests that 10% sample of the accessible population is adequate to serve as a study sample. Since this district has 124 primary schools which is a small population, a sample of 20% that is 25 primary schools was used in this study. At least six primary schools were selected from each division. This study administered questionnaires to 25 head teachers and interviewed one executive committee official from the sampled schools in the district. The population and sample sizes are indicated in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Sample sizes for different population sizes

Respondents	Target population	Sample size
Head teachers	124	25
Chairmen of committees	124	25
Total	248	50

3.5 Research Instruments

The data was be collected from head teachers using Questionnaires with closed and open ended questions to ensure consistency in getting independent view of the respondent. According to Mbwesa (2006) this method encourages high response rate because the respondent can complete the questionnaire in their own time. The questionnaires attempted to answer questions developed by the researcher. They had four sections covering KCPE performance, education level of parents, tuition fees charged by schools and availability of form one vacancies. The questionnaires were structured in a simple and understandable language. At the same time interview schedules were used to collect key information from school committees. Questionnaires were dropped and picked while interviews were conducted through face to face meetings. Open ended

questions were included which allowed respondents to give an in-depth response to subject of study.

3.6 Instruments validity

The concept of validity ordinarily refers to the notion that an idea is well grounded and well supported and thus one can have confidence in it. The validity of the instruments used in this study was established by ensuring that they are based on the objectives and then were appraised by an expert's in the area of educational administration and planning at the University of Nairobi. Their ratings and comments helped in ensuring content validity during the investigation.

3.7 Instruments Reliability.

Reliability refers to the degree of consistency with which instances are assigned to the same category by different observers or by the same observer on different occasions (Hammersley, 1992). The researcher used test-retest technique in order to test the reliability of the instruments. The instruments was given to similar subjects for the study but not used in the final study. The same instruments were administered to the same group of subjects after two weeks. A comparison between the responses obtained in the two tests was made using Pearson's correlation co-efficient formulae (r) as indicated below.

$$r = \frac{N\sum XY - \sum X \sum Y}{\sqrt{[N\sum X^2 - (\sum X)^2][N\sum Y^2 - (\sum Y)^2]^{1/2}}}$$

Where $\sum xy$ = sum of the gross product of the values of each variables

$(\sum X) (\sum y)$ = product of the sum of x and the sum of y and N = total number of items. If the reliability of the instrument is above 0.8, it is considered to have a very good reliability. The pilot study obtained a coefficient correlation of 0.75. This means that the research instruments could be relied upon for the study.

3.8 Data collection procedures

The researcher sought a permit from the ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology through an introduction letter from the University of Nairobi. Subsequent clearance to carry out the research was obtained from the district commissioner and the district education officer of Meru central district. The researcher then sought permission from the head of the target primary schools. He personally visited each school and administered the questionnaires after explaining to the respondents their expected roles in the research.

3.9 Data analysis techniques

According to Platton (1990), one should be able to construct a framework for communicating the sense of what the data reveals. The data collected was verified in line with the research objectives so as to answer research questions in a relevant manner. Data analysis started with editing and inspection of the instruments in order to identify any wrongly responded to or un-

responded to items. Tables and charts were used to record information from questionnaires. Descriptive statistics such as mean, percentages and frequency distribution were mainly used to analyze demographic data. Descriptive statistics were used on items on the rating scale while non-ranked was arranged to identify the frequency. Qualitative data was gathered in non-numeric form and the results presented descriptively. Categories containing high number of responses were shown using the mode. The analysis was accomplished using frequencies, tables, pie charts and graphs generated by use of the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). The data was then used to create frequency and percentage tables and charts. The data was then analyzed in line with the research questions, and objectives of the study. The study findings were then discussed and relevant conclusions and recommendations made.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATIONS

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of the study was to investigate factors that influence transition of pupils from primary schools to secondary in Meru central district in Kenya. This section presents the analyzed data on factors influencing transition of pupils' from primary to secondary schools in Meru central districts. The factors include how academic performance of pupils' at Kenya certificate of primary education (K.C.P.E), influences transition from primary to secondary schools, to determine the relationship between education level of parents and transition of pupils' from primary to secondary schools, to establish how tuition fees charged students' when joining form one affects transition of pupils' from primary to secondary schools and to determine how availability of form one vacancies in secondary schools, affects transition of pupils' from primary to secondary schools in Meru central district. Information is presented in tables, pie-charts and graphs according to the study objectives. Interpretation of the findings has also been done to answer the research questions. The presentation of the findings is organized around the key variables such as academic performance of pupils at Kenya certificate of primary education, education level of parents of these pupils, tuition fees required when pupils are joining form one and availability of form one vacancies in secondary schools. The bio- data has also been analyzed and presented to provide relevant characteristics of the respondents.

4.2 Questionnaire return rate

Out of twenty five (25) questionnaires distributed twenty three (23) were completed and returned representing a return rate of 92%. Twenty two (22) committee chairmen of schools out of the sampled twenty five (25) were interviewed which is a return rate of 88% as indicated in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Questionnaire return rate

Instruments	Target	Number returned	Percentage
Head teachers	25	23	92
School committees	25	22	88

4.3 The influence of KCPE performance on transition rate to secondary school

Kenya certificate of primary Education has profound consequences for candidate's life chances because it determines the category and level of secondary school one is admitted. Kenyan secondary schools are formally stratified into a three-tier hierarchy on the basis of their catchment areas and KCPE results determine which tier candidates are entitled to enter. Schools in the higher tier are known as national schools with the best facilities and as a

result require high qualifications for admission. The second tier is made up of provincial secondary schools which are equally competitive and require high KCPE scores for admission. The district secondary schools form the lowest category and so are their facilities. When the pupils' sit KCPE, this marks the last level of primary education system and it ushers them to the next level in the education system. Though a system is a self- contained unit, it is part of a wider higher order, and is organized in a series such that the output of one is the input for another subsystem.

4.3.1 Relationship between admission to secondary school and KCPE score

The secondary school students are admitted to have direct relationship with the KCPE score attained. This means that the students who score high marks are admitted to national or provincial schools while the low academic performers are admitted to district schools in the neighborhood. Information on Table 4.2 and 4.3 illustrates this relationship.

Table 4.2 Transition to secondary schools during 2010-2012

	Number of candidates	50- 150	151- 250	251- 350	Above 350	
YEAR						
2010	511	85	301	124	1	
No. admitted to sec school		16	263	118	1	398
2011	478	51	296	128	3	
No. admitted to sec school		8	227	113	3	351
2012	508	62	273	168	5	
No. admitted to sec school		11	234	163	5	413

As shown in Table 4.2, out of 1497 candidates who sat KCPE in the period 2010, 2011 and 2012, 1162 were admitted to public secondary schools representing 77.6% admission rate. However, it is interesting to note that all the students who scored 350 marks and above were admitted to public secondary.

The category that registered the lowest admission during the period in question was 50-150 where only 35 were admitted out of 198 leaving out 163. Table 4.3 indicates admissions in percentages in each category.

Table 4.3 Percentage comparison of admissions and non-admission

Year		%	%	%	%
		admission	admission	admission	admission
		50-150	151-250	251-350	Above 351
2010	Admitted	18.8	87.4	92.8	100
	Not/adm	81.2	12.6	7.2	0
2011	Admitted	15.7	76.7	88.3	100
	Not/adm	84.3	23.3	11.7	0
2012	Admitted	17.7	84.8	97.0	100
	N/adm	82.3	15.2	3.0	0

The category of 351 and above registered 100% admission to secondary schools during the three years studied. This was followed by 251-350 that had 92.8 % in 2010, 88.3% in 2011 and 97% in 2012. The lower score of 151-150 also registered an impressive rate of admission with 87.4% in 2010, 76.7% in 2011

and 84.8% in 2012. The lower category of 50-150 increase in the reverse where those not admitted made 81.2 % in 2010, 84.3% in 2011 and 82.3% in 2012. In addition the committee members were asked to comment on whether there is a relationship between KCPE performance and admission to form one and their responses are presented in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Parents responses on KCPE performance

Responses	Yes	No
Relationship between KCPE and form one admission	18	4
If all students are admitted	6	14

In addition the school committees interviewed agreed that there is a strong relationship between KCPE score and form one admission. Out of the 22 committee members interviewed 18 agreed that there is a strong relationship between form one admission and KCPE scores student attained. On the question of whether all candidates who sits KCPE transit to secondary schools, 14 of the committees' members disagreed meaning that not all candidates manage to join secondary school. This response may have been made in

reference to the candidates scoring below 150 marks who registered the lowest rate of admission.

School committee members and head teachers were asked to give reasons that contribute to poor performance in the district. Their responses are indicated on Table 4.5.

Table 4.5 Reasons for poor performance

Reasons on KCPE performance	Frequency	Percentage
Negative attitude of students	31	70.5
Illiteracy levels of parents	21	47.7
Lack of role models	13	29.5
Inadequate teachers in school	37	84.1
Societal attitudes	18	40.9
Lack of community support	24	54.5
Chronic absenteeism of	17	37.8

pupils

Teachers' contribution is of paramount significance in the learning process and this may be the reason why majority (85.1%) of the respondents attributed poor to poor performance in KCPE in the district. This is because schools lacked enough teachers hence parents had employed untrained teachers (school leavers), to help the children. This is followed by negative attitude of students towards education which was cited by 70.5% of the respondents. Good performance is a collective initiative of teachers and parents. This may explain why the study established that some students opt to seek informal employment instead of continuing to secondary schools. Things are not made better by the fact that community does not support education, illiteracy of parents, and lack of role models among others hence education is left to the teachers only.

4.4 Influence of level of education of parents on transition to secondary schools

The parent's level of education has a lot of influence on schooling of children because the more educated parents are, the more likely they are to enroll their children and push them through school (Holmes, 2003). Questions were asked in this regard and the findings are as follows.

4.4.1. Level of education of parents

The committee members were requested to indicate the education level of parents in their schools. The findings are shown on Table 4.6

Table 4.6 Education level of parents

Responses	Frequencies
None	2
Primary	15
Secondary	4
Total	21

The responses show that majority of parents have primary education, with some having none at all. This is likely to have a relationship with the high number of candidates scoring low marks, as most parents lack the ability to assist their children with school work. Parents with such levels of education may not precisely know the importance of education.

To establish how education level influenced transition rates the respondents were asked to indicate whether they agreed if the parents in the district were educated and the findings are shown in Figure 4.1.

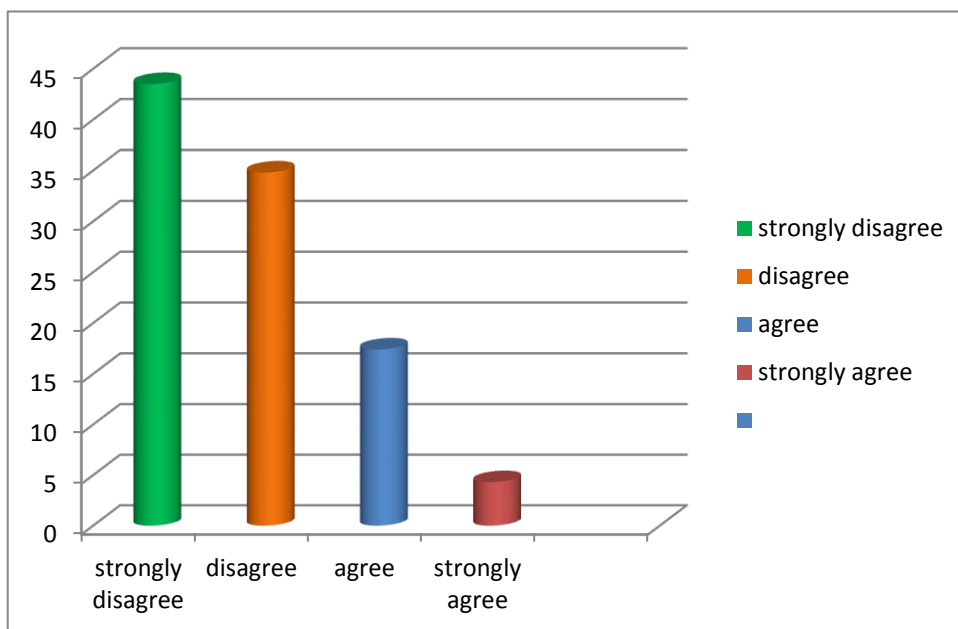


Figure 4.1: Education level of parents

Majority of the respondents (78.3%) agreed that most of the parents in the district are not educated. This has a lot of influence on education of their children in that these children are not encouraged to continue with schooling. The academic attainment of parents enhances positive attitudinal change towards children's education and therefore parents who are not educated or have just the basic education, do not see the benefits of education hence do not encourage their children to transit to high school.

4.4.2 Value of education as a way of alleviating poverty by parents

Education is commonly viewed as a key to both economic and intellectual success. To establish whether parents in the District appreciated the value of education as a way of alleviating the respondents were requested rate there degree of agreement and the findings are presented in Figure 4.2.

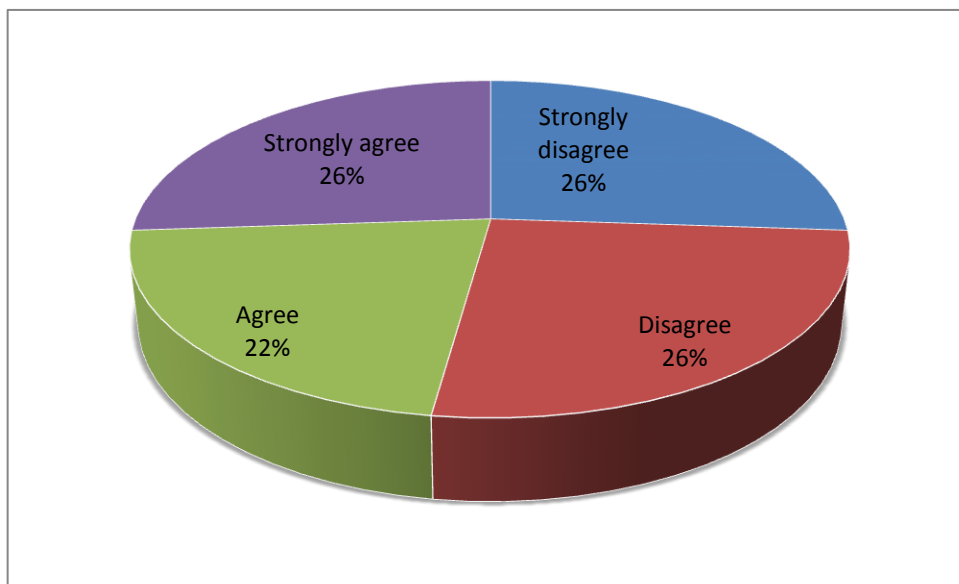


Fig4.2Parents value of education as a way of alleviating poverty

Figure 4.2 presents the responses by committee member who during the interviews said that most parents did not view education as a way of alleviating poverty. Most of the respondents (52.2%) disagreed that parents in the district valued education as a way of alleviating poverty. This indicates that for the majority of the parents, indicated that education for their children was not a priority.

4.4.3 Parents allow children to be employed instead of schooling

Parents who are not educated or have just the basic education, may not see the benefits of education hence encourage their children to seek

employment instead of transiting to secondary school. To establish if education was a priority for parents in Meru Central the respondents were requested to indicate their degree of agreement with the statement whether parents allow children to be employed instead of schooling. The findings are presented on Table 4.7, and Fig 4.3

Table 4.7 Whether parents encourage their children to join secondary school

Responses	Yes	sNo
Parents encourage their students to join secondary school	9	12

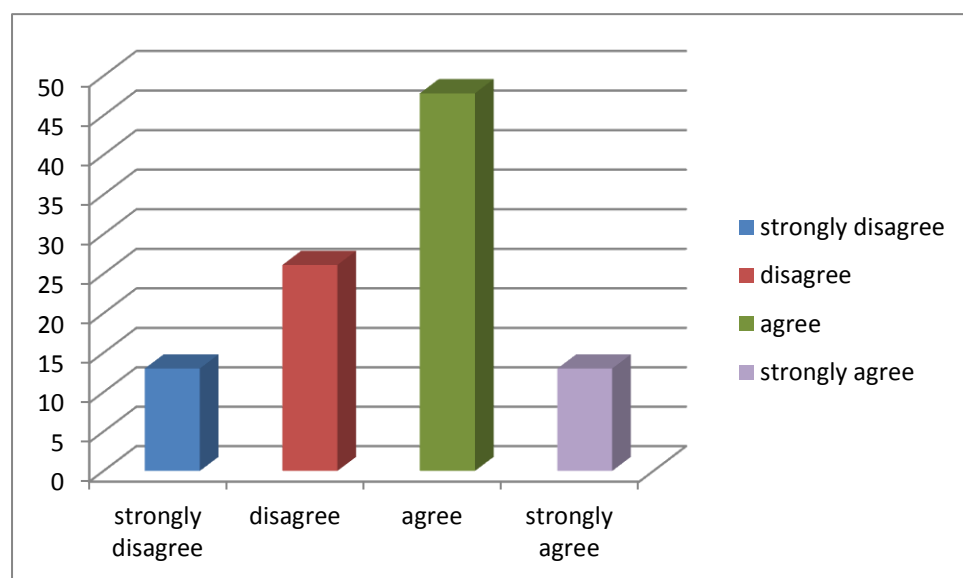


Fig 4.3 Parents allowing children to be employed

Interviews held with school committee members revealed that parents do not encourage their children to join secondary schools as shown in Table4.7. As indicated in fig4.3, significant percentage (47.8%) agreed that some parents in the district would allow their children to seek employment after KCPE instead of continuing to secondary school.

4.4.4 Parents assisting their children with school work

Parents are effective in helping their children in academic work and also monitor and supervise their children’s academic progress as established in the literature review. To establish whether parents in the district assisted their children with school work, the respondents were requested to indicate their degree of agreement with the statement and the findings are presented in Fig 4.4

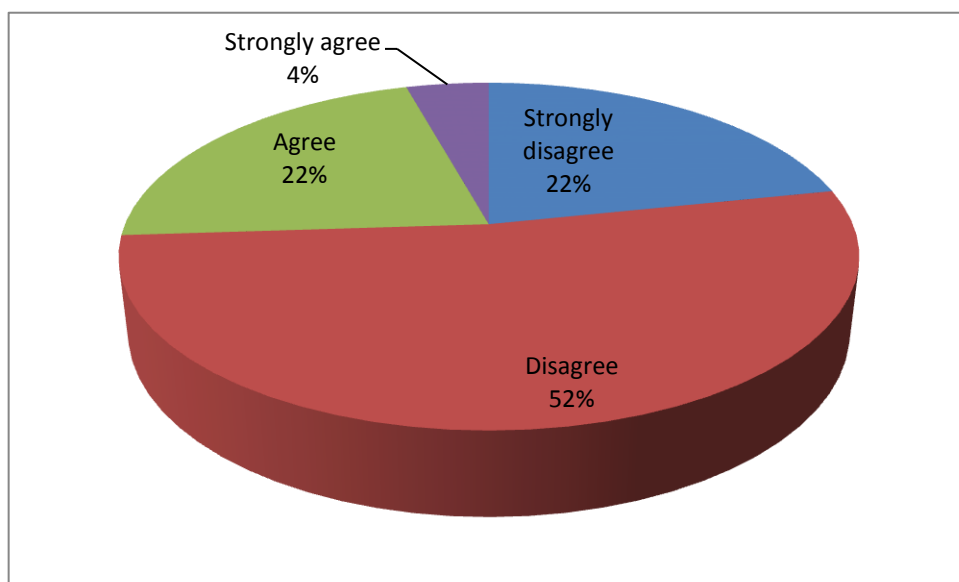


Fig4.4 Parents assisting their children with school work

Majority of the respondents (73.9%) indicated that parents in the district were not keen in assisting their children with school work. This may be attributed to the revelation by the study that most parents in the district were not educated and that education for their children was not a priority. Findings on whether parents influence their children to drop out of school are indicated in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8 Parents influence students to drop out of school

	Frequency	Percent
strongly disagree	8	13.0
Disagree	6	26.1
Agree	6	26.1
strongly agree	3	34.8
Total	23	100.0

The study established from 60.9% of the respondent that, parents encourage their children to drop out of school. This explains why there are children who complete standard eight and do not transit to secondary school. This was supported by reports from parent's interview that parents engage their children in farm work at the expense of education; hence children do not attend holiday and weekend free tuition that teachers are willing to offer them. Questions were

asked on whether parents organize private tuition for their children and results are indicated in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9 Parents organize private tuition for their children

	Frequency	Percent
strongly disagree	11	47.8
Disagree	5	21.7
Agree	3	13.0
strongly agree	4	17.4
Total	23	100.0

Majority of the respondent (69.5%) agreed that parents do not organize private tuition for their children as indicated in table 4.9. This serves to explain why performance in the district has been poor, because children are not encouraged to achieve even from home by their parents. Parent’s level of education has a lot of impact on schooling of children because the more educated parents are, the more likely they are to enroll their children and push them through school. Parental decisions affect children retention in a school system such that students, whose parents monitor and regulate their activities, provide them with emotional support and encourage independent decision.

4.4.5 Parents attend school meetings promptly

Questions were asked to find out whether parents attend school meeting promptly as a way of measuring their commitment to education of their children. Their responses are indicated in Table 4.10, and Fig 4.5.

Table 4.10 Parents attend school meetings promptly

	Frequency	Percent
strongly disagree	9	39.2
Disagree	4	17.4
Agree	3	13.0
strongly agree	7	30.4
Total	23	100.0

Schools normally call for parents meeting from time to time to plan for the schools, because parents are important stakeholders in the schools. The study established as indicated in Table 4.10 and Figure 4.6, by 56.7 % of the respondents that parents do come for school meetings when called to do so by head teachers and school committees, hence head teachers send children home from classes to call their parents so that they can come for meetings. This shows the kind of commitment parent's towards the education of their children. This sends the wrong signal to the parents that their parents are not interested with their schooling.

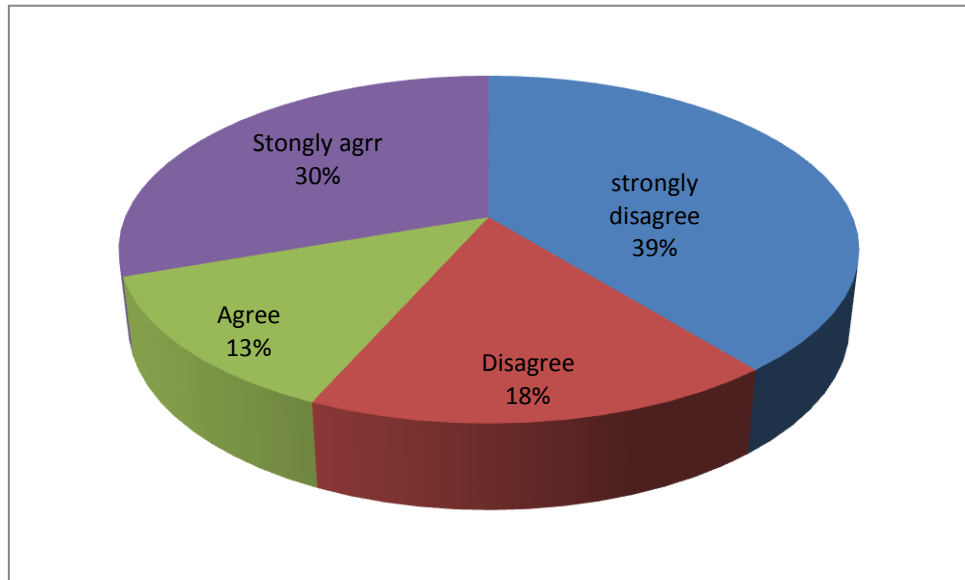


Fig 4.5 Parents attend school meetings promptly

4.4.6 Effects of parents level of education on transition

Questions were asked to find out whether parents attend school meeting promptly as a way of measuring their commitment to education of their children. Their responses are indicated in Table 4.11

Table 4.11 Effects of parents' level of education on transition

Effects of parents education level	Frequency	Percentage
on transition of pupils		33.3
Lack of parental motivation	15	
Frequent absenteeism	29	64.4
Child labor	18	40.0

The interviews conducted among the committee members indicated in Table 4.11 showed that student absenteeism was very common among the students

standing at 64.4% followed by child labor at 40% meaning that parents to a large extent allowed their children to provide labor instead of schooling. This in return affected the performance of the students in school as well.

4.5 Influence of tuition Fees charged on transition to secondary schools

Parents are required to meet some operational costs such as tuition and maintenance fees and may be required to pay for many other things including food, uniforms, learning materials, and special equipment when their children are joining form one.

4.5.1 Failure to join secondary school due to lack of school fees

To establish whether this requirement influences transition to secondary education, the respondents were asked to indicate whether there were students admitted to secondary schools and failed to join due to lack of fees. The findings are recorded in Table 4.12.

Table 4.12 Failure to join secondary school due to lack of school fees

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Yes	19	82.6
No	4	17.4
Total	23	100.0

Most of the respondents (82.6%) indicated that there were students in the district who fail to join secondary school due to lack of school fees. This relates with the revelation by the study that there were parents willing to allow their children take up employment other than joining secondary school.

4.5.2 Adequacy of government investment in education

Even after the government moved to provide free day secondary education system, the cost of education to households in Kenya continues to remain high for many to attend secondary school. This is evident from the findings shown on Table 4.13.

Table 4.13 Adequacy of government investment in education

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	1	4.3
No	22	95.7
Total	23	100.0

Majority (95.7%) of the respondents indicated that the government investment in education was not adequate. This may explain why some students whose parents could not raise school requirements, did not join form one since the government intervention to assist them was inadequate and at times not available.

4.5.3 Difficulties in raising fees

Parents and guardians are expected to raise fees and other requirements for their children to join secondary school and some households may find difficulties in doing this as established in the literature reviewed. To find out if this was experienced in Meru Central the respondents were requested to indicate whether parents had difficulties in raising fees and the findings are shown on Table 4.14.

Table 4.14 Difficulties in raising fees

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	19	82.6
No	4	17.4
Total	23	100.0

It is evident that most parents and guardians had difficulties raising school fees for their children to join form one as indicated by 82.6% of the respondents and only 17.4% had no difficulties in raising fees for their children. This may be one of the reasons why some did not attend school though admitted in secondary schools.

4.6 Availability of form one vacancies in secondary schools

A significant number of studies have observed that, the uneven distribution of educational opportunities between regions, both in urban and rural environments. This wanted to establish whether distance between home and school as well as availability of equipped schools influenced transition from primary to secondary schools.

4.6.1 The influence of distance between home and school

The study wanted to establish whether distance between home and school affected transition from primary to secondary schools in Meru Central and the findings are indicated in Table 4.15.

Table 4.15 Influence of distance between home and school

	Frequency	Percent
strongly disagree	12	52.2
Disagree	3	13.0
Agree	5	21.7
strongly agree	3	13.0
Total	23	100.0

Majority of the respondents (65.5 %) tended to disagree with the possibility of distance between school and home being of significant influence on transition to secondary schools. This may be as a result of construction of day secondary schools in most rural areas in the country making secondary schools available within walking distances. This is also confirmed the findings from interviews from school committee representatives. However where education is not a priority the CDF funds that other areas have used to increase secondary schools are used for other development agenda and this explains why a significant number of respondents (34.7%) agreed that distance between home and school affected transition from primary to secondary schools in in some parts of Meru Central.

4.6.2 Qualified students missing opportunity to join secondary school

Inadequate secondary schools in relation to demand by students graduating from primary schools especially after introduction of FPE can influence transition from primary to secondary school. The study sought to establish whether there students who qualified in KCPE and the findings are shown on Table 4.16.

Table 4.16 Qualified students missing opportunity to join secondary school

	Frequency	Percent
strongly disagree	11	47.8
Disagree	6	26.1
Agree	4	17.4
strongly agree	2	8.7
Total	23	100.0

Majority (73.9%) of the respondents disagreed with the statement that there could be students who passed but failed to secure a vacancy in secondary school. This again might be as a result of a strong presence of day secondary schools in close proximity. Conversely a significant number (26.1%) agreed with 8.7% strongly that there are students who passed but not admitted to

secondary schools. This is likely to be the group that felt that the form one selection criteria was not fair to all students.

4.6.3 Adequacy of secondary schools in the district

Lack of schools within a reasonable walking distance for those in poor regions is a serious barrier to transition, especially in rural and remote parts of countries. The study sought to establish whether there were enough secondary schools in the district to guarantee transition of learners to secondary school. To establish this, the respondents were requested to indicate whether there are enough secondary schools in the district and the findings are indicated in Fig 4.6.

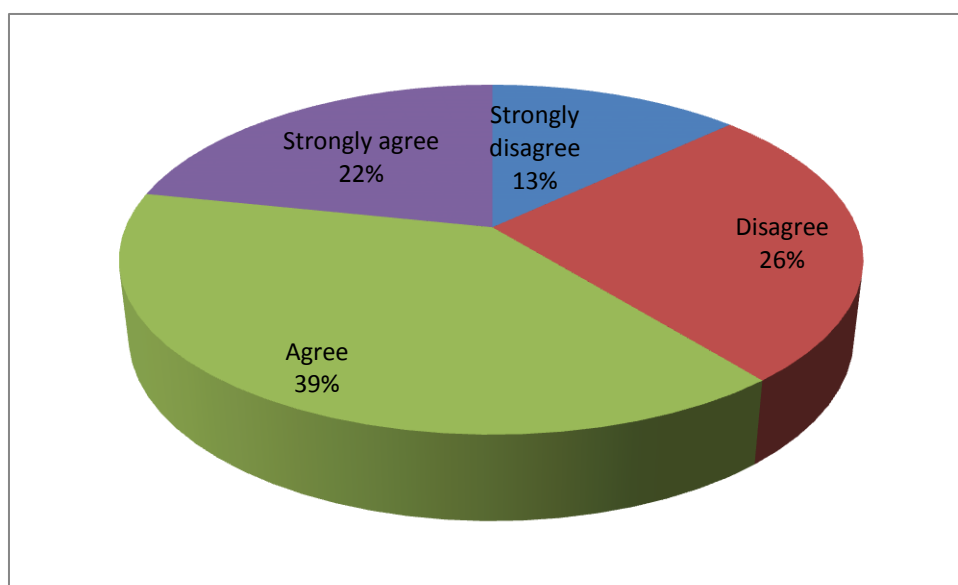


Fig 4.6 Adequacy of secondary schools in the district

Most (60.8%) of the respondents agreed that there were enough schools in the district while significant percentage (39.1%) felt that the schools were not enough. This may be the reason why some students lacked form one vacancies despite the fact that they had passed in KCPE. The head teachers and school

committees were asked to give factors influencing transition to secondary schools. The reasons were given on Table 4.17.

Table 4.17 Other factors influencing transition of pupils

Factors	Frequency	Percentage
Early marriages	26	55.3
Child labor	20	42.5
Lack of community support	35	74.5
Parents don't value education	18	38.2
Single mother families	14	29.8
Distance between home & school	26	55.3
Boys joining <i>boda boda</i> business	10	21.3
Drinking local brews	15	31.9
Children under the care of grandparents	29	61.7
Day secondary	38	84.4

education

Though there are many factors affecting transition of pupils' from primary schools to secondary schools in the district, as cited by the respondent, those with greatest influence include, lack of community support (74.5%), children under the care of grandparents (61.7%), distance between home and school (55.3%) and early marriages (55.3%). This explains why many students are not able to join secondary schools because grandparents may not afford to raise school fees. Education is lacking adequate support in the district because many parents are not educated therefore they do not value education as a way of alleviating poverty, hence they encourage their children to take up employment instead of transiting to secondary.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter covers the summary of the findings of the study on factors influencing transition of pupils from primary to secondary schools in Meru central district; conclusions made from the findings and the recommendations derived from the study respectively.

5.2 Summary of the study and research findings

The purpose of the study was to establish the factors influencing transition of pupils' from primary to secondary schools in Meru central district. The study established that a system has some predictability and this is also similar to a school since those who enter standard one are expected to exit after standard eight. The functioning of a system is affected by its environment. Parents are key players and form part of the environment of an education system, because they influence or motivate the pupils to continue with school or not to, and they

meet the cost of schooling for their children and especially when transiting to form one. A system is governed by feedback. The KCPE performance provides this feedback on how the system is fairing. The study established that during the period 2010 - 2012 out of the 1497 students who sat KCPE, 335 were not admitted to any secondary school. This shows that there are students in the district who were not benefiting from secondary education. Specific factors influencing transition from primary to secondary schools investigated in the study included academic performance in KCPE, Education level of parents, tuition fees charged students when joining form one and availability of form one vacancies in secondary schools as discussed in this chapter.

5.2.1 Academic performance in KCPE examinations

In Kenya, good performance at KCPE Examination enhances pupil's transition to good public secondary schools. The study established that KCPE performance had a great influence on the opportunities and the kind of schools candidates are admitted to. In line with this, the study established that those who scored 350 and above in KCPE in the period 2010-2012 were all admitted to public secondary schools, however these were only 9(0.006%) out of 1497. Those who scored 251-350 were not badly off since out of 420 candidates, only 26 (0.06%) failed to obtain a vacancy in public schools. On the contrary those that scored 151-250, out of 870 candidates 146 (16.8%) were not admitted to any secondary school. The worst hit category was that which scored 50-150 marks because out of 198 candidates 163 (82.3%) were not admitted to any

public secondary school. The study established that candidates in the district were performing poorly in KCPE and this affected their chances of securing admission in national and provincial schools.

5.2.2 Education level of the parents

Educated parents are likely to provide a more conducive learning environment for their children at home and also encourage them to transit to secondary schools. The study established that most parents in the district have just primary education as their highest level of academic attainment, according to information given by the school committees. As a result parents do not value education hence education of their children is not a priority as indicated by 52.2% of the respondent. They also allow their children to get employed instead of schooling.

At the same time the study established that parents were not keen in assisting their children with school work as indicated by 73.9% of the respondent. Interviews conducted among school committees also revealed that the community does not support education and most children are under the care of grandparents who are likely to have no education at all. The study has established that the level of education of the parents is affecting transition of students from primary to secondary school in the district in that they lack

capacity to play their role effectively as far as education of their children is concerned.

5.2.3 Tuition fees charged students when joining form one

Households shoulder a large portion of secondary education costs and for poor households, this can be a challenge. The study established that there were students who failed to join secondary schools due to lack of tuition fees as indicated by 82.6% of the respondents. The governments investment in education was not enough as established from 95.7% of the respondents, hence the schools charge high tuition fees to cater for various school cost. This explains why some of the students admitted to secondary schools, after passing KCPE did not proceed. It was further established from the committees that the student who lack school fees end up taking the less demanding alternatives like boda boda business, child labor and drinking local brews. The study therefore established that, lack of tuition fees is a key barrier to transition to secondary school and especially for children from the poor households.

5.2.4 Availability of form one vacancies in secondary schools

Transition from primary to secondary schools is pegged on the number of available vacancies in secondary schools. The study established from 65.5% of the respondent that the distance between home and school had little influence on transition of students probably due to provision of many day secondary schools in the district since the introduction subsidized secondary education. A

substantial 34.8% of the respondents agreed that there were students who passed KCPE but lacked form one vacancies. A further 39.1% of the respondents indicated that the secondary schools in the district were not enough. This helps to explain why there are students who pass KCPE and lack form one admission in secondary schools.

5.3 Conclusions

Progression of learners from one level of education to another is a measure of a schooling system internal efficiency as well as its physical capacity. However, transition from primary to secondary schools in Meru central has remained low over the years despite the introduction of day secondary education. This study concluded that many students completing primary education are not progressing to secondary school due to poor performance in KCPE, and therefore measures should be taken to improve KCPE performance, since many candidates are scoring below 250 marks. Poor performance leads many students to be left out of schooling system, leading to early marriages, drinking liquor, child labor among others. Furthermore, low levels of parent's education were found to be a hindrance to transition in that, besides not encouraging their children to continue with secondary education, they did assist them with school work, motivate them to continue with education and on the contrary encouraged them to join informal employment. Therefore there is need to take measures that will lead to change of attitude of parents in favor of education.

The study established that tuition fees prohibited students who passed KCPE from proceeding with secondary education. Many poor households had difficulties meeting the requirements for joining form one hence their children end up taking other less progressive alternatives shown in the summary. There need for more government support of education targeting the poor households because education is the most effective way of breaking the vicious cycle of poverty. The study further established that not all students who passed with at least 200 marks and above were admitted in secondary schools due limitation in vacancies. Measures should be put in place to expand secondary school learning infrastructure to accommodate all qualified candidates in the school system.

5.4 Recommendations

Secondary education is very important for many individuals, because it improves their standards of living when they get jobs, and determines their future life chances and mobility out of poverty. Transition to secondary education is beneficial in more than economic and social development because it promotes active citizenship as well as enhances social cohesion by increasing trust and tolerance amongst individuals. In order to obtain these benefits of secondary education in Meru Central, a lot of deliberate measures need to be taken to overcome the existing challenges.

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made;

- i) The Teachers service commission should provide qualified teaching personnel to meet the needs of learners in order to improve KCPE performance in the district.
- ii) The District Education office should come up with practical measures to sensitize the parents on the importance of education in order to change their attitudes.
- iii) Efforts should be made by district education office to ensure even distribution of secondary schools with relevant and adequate infrastructures in the district.

5.5 Suggestions for further research

The study focused on specific factors influencing transition to secondary schools which included; performance at Kenya certificate of primary education, Education level of parents, tuitions fees required when joining form one and availability of form one vacancies in secondary schools. Therefore the study recommends the following areas for further research.

- i) To establish where candidates who are not admitted to secondary schools go to after completing primary education
- ii) To establish the factors that influence performance of students in KCPE
- iii) To establish the effectiveness of day secondary schools education in the district

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APPENDIX I

Letter of introduction

Dominic Muthuri Kirera,

P.o. Box 74929-00

Nairobi

Date-----

Dear sir/Madam,

Re: Permission to collect data

I am a post graduate student at University of Nairobi undertaking a master course in Educational Administration and Planning. I am carrying out research project on Factors influencing students transition of pupils' from primary to secondary schools in Meru central district, in fulfillment of my degree. I wish to seek your approval to collect the necessary data for this project. This shall entail administering questionnaires to the Head teachers, in selected institutions and interview schedules for sampled members of school committees and education officers. This information shall be used for the purpose of this research only.

Thanks in advance.

Yours faithfully,

Dominic Muthuri Kirera.

APPENDIX II

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR HEADTEACHERS OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Introduction.

This questionnaire is designed for a study on factors influencing transition of pupils' from primary to secondary schools in Meru central district. Respond to each question by giving appropriate answers. The information given will be used for the purposes of this study only. Your honest responses will be highly appreciated.

Name of the school-----

Section A: Performance in K.C.P.E

- 1) Indicate the number of candidates who scored in the following categories.

Years	K.C.P.E Results in categories	No. of candidates score per category	No. of candidates who joined form one	No. of candidates who did not join form one
2010	50—150mks			
	151—250mks			
	251—350mks			

	351& above
TOTAL	
2011	50—150mks
	151—250mks
	251—350mks
	351& above

TOTAL	
2012	50—150mks
	151—250mks
	251—350mks
	351& above

TOTAL

i. How many pupils managed to score 250 marks and above from your school in the last three years? -----

ii. Based on performance criteria mentioned in (i) above, how many pupils were admitted to secondary schools?-----

-

- iii. How many among those admitted were able to proceed to form one based on the above performance 2010-----2011-----
2012-----
- iv. Are there students who had passed but were not admitted to any secondary school? Yes-----No----
- v. Is it true that KCPE performance was used as basis of discrimination during form one admissions in the district? Yes-----No-----
- vi. Are there pupils who were not admitted to any secondary schools because of poor performance? Yes----- No-----
- vii. Are pupils of this school motivated to continue with education to secondary schools Yes-----No-----

Section B: Education level of parents of the pupils’.

- i) To what extent do the parents of your school value education (mark or tick the scores as indicated in each category).

Scores are in a scale of 1-4

Strongly
disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly
agree

1

2

3

4

All parents of this school are educated

Parents spend a reasonable amount of
income on Education

Parents allow their children to be employed
instead schooling

Parents value education as a way of
alleviating poverty

Parents Influence the student to continue
with schooling

Influence the students to drop out of school

Meet the financial burden of schooling

Attend school meetings promptly

Assist their children with school work

Organize private tuition for their children

Section C: Tuition fees requirements for joining form one

a) Are there pupils in your school who were admitted to secondary schools but failed to join as a result lack of;

i) School fees-----

ii) Other requirements-----

b) Does your school have any policy of assisting needy pupils to join form one?

Yes_____ No_____

c) If yes give the fund raising method used_____

d) Is the government investment in education enough to enhance good pupils' transition to secondary schools Yes----No-----

e) Do parents find any difficulties when raising school fees for their children to join form one? Yes ---- No-----

Section D: Availability of form one vacancies in secondary schools.

4) In a scale of 1-4, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly
--	-------------------	----------	-------	----------

				agree
Distance between home and school hinders transition to secondary school				
pupils who pass and are not admitted to any sec school				
Schools in the district have enough infrastructure for form one admission				
There are enough secondary school in the district				
KCPE performance is a good criterion of form one admission				

APPENDIX III

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR OFFICIALS OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Section A: performance in K.C.P.E

- i) Is there a relationship between K.C.P.E score attained and form one admission? Yes----- No----
- ii) Are pupils generally motivated to learn in this? Yes-----No-----
- iii) Do all the pupils in this school join form one after completing secondary school? Yes-----No-----
- iv) Is KCPE used as criteria for form one admission in the district? -----

Section B: Education level of parents

- i) Generally what is the highest level of parent's education in your school?
- ii) Do parents have children in more than one secondary school? Yes/No-

- iii) Are there other members of the family who can help parents in paying the fees for their children Yes---No---
- iv) Is education valued by parents in this school? Yes -----No-----
- v) Do parents encourage their children to join secondary schools Yes/No
- vi) .Do parents attend all school meetings without coercion? Yes—No--

Section C: Tuition fees requirements when joining form one

- i) Did you have any difficulties in raising money to buy form one requirements?
- ii) Are there people or organizations that assist parents in raising funds for form one admission requirements? Yes-----No-----
- iii) Would the availability/in availability of funds hinder children from going to secondary School? Yes-----No-----
- v) Would you prefer your child to acquire employment rather than go to a secondary school? Yes-----No-----

Section D: Availability of form one vacancies

- i) Did you secure a form one vacancy for your child or was admitted?---
- ii) What was the criterion of form one admissions [District selection] [Provincial selection] [National selection]. Tick appropriate responses.

iii) Does the distance between home and school affect your attendance to secondary school? Yes----No-----

iv) Are there enough secondary schools in the area? Yes-----No-----