FACTORS INFLUENCING LEARNERS’ TRANSITION FROM PRESCHOOL TO PRIMARY SCHOOL. A CASE OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN THIKA-WEST DISTRICT, KIAMBU COUNTY- KENYA

BY

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2013
DECLARATION

This Research Project Report is my original work and has not been submitted to any other university for the award of a degree.

Signature………………………………..                         Date………………………………

Mureithi Judy Wamaitha
L50/70053/2011

This Research Project Report has been submitted for examination with my approval as the University supervisor.

Signature………………………………..                         Date………………………………

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DEDICATION
I would like to dedicate my Research Project Report to my beloved parents Joseph and Sabina and my brothers Peter and Bedan. It is through your invaluable love and great desire to see me excel to this level of academics.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My gratitude goes to Prof. Gakuu my supervisor, for his dedicated guidance and supervision during the study. Thank you for your time, patience and coaching all through.

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I take this opportunity to give thanks to the Almighty God for His guidance, grace, strength and protection throughout the programme.

Special appreciation goes to my classmates; you have been a source of encouragement all through the programme. My sincere appreciation goes to all my family members, my aunties; Salome, Jane and Magdalene, my grandparents; Mr. and Mrs. Bedan Chai for their prayers, support and encouragement and my friends for their support and encouragement throughout my study.

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<tr>
<td>DICECE</td>
<td>District Centre for Early Childhood Education</td>
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<td>ECD</td>
<td>Early Childhood Development</td>
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<td>ECDE</td>
<td>Early Childhood Development and Education</td>
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<td>EFA</td>
<td>Education for All</td>
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<tr>
<td>FPE</td>
<td>Free Primary Education</td>
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<td>KIE</td>
<td>Kenya Institute of Education</td>
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<td>MDGs</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goals</td>
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<td>MOE</td>
<td>Ministry Of Education</td>
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<td>NACECE</td>
<td>National Centre for Early Childhood Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPSS</td>
<td>Statistical Package for Social Sciences</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United National Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization</td>
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ABSTRACT

This study was concerned with factors influencing learners’ transition from Preschool to primary school in Thika-west District-Kiambu County. Teachers play a big role in enhancing the transition of learners from Preschool to primary school. The study was guided by the following objectives, to determine the extent to which physical environmental factors influence learners’ transition from preschool to primary school, to establish the extent to which language of instruction influence learners’ transition from preschool to primary school, to assess the extent to which teachers’ capacity influence learners’ transition from preschool to primary school and to determine the extent to which teaching methods influence learners’ transition from preschool to primary school. The literature reviewed was under the following sub heading: Overview of ECDE and primary education in Kenya, concept of transition from preschool to primary school, physical environmental factors on learners’ transition from preschool to primary school, teachers’ capacity on learners’ transition from preschool to primary school, language of instruction on learners’ transition from preschool to primary school, teaching methods on learners transition from preschool to primary school, Conceptual framework, Gaps in literature and the summary of the literature reviewed.

The data was collected through the use of descriptive survey design in Thika-West, Kiambu County; the target population of 234 included teachers of public primary schools with a preschool attached. The sampling techniques that were used included; stratified sampling and simple random sampling for selecting teachers and census sampling technique in selecting public primary schools with a preschool attached. From the public primary schools with preschool centers attached a total of 153 teachers, 118 lower primary teachers and 35 preschool teachers were selected. The research instruments that were used included questionnaires and a pilot test was done to test reliability of the instruments using a school in the nearby district. The information collected was analyzed through descriptive analysis that involved ANOVA statistics. Descriptive statistical methods were used in analyzing the results. SPSS (Statistical Packages for Social Sciences) was used in tabulation of variables and generation of appropriate frequency percentages. Tables were used in presentation of the result. The study established that teachers’ level of training, physical environment, language of instruction and teaching methods were the major factors influencing learners’ transition from pre-school to lower primary. It was found out that overpopulation in the classroom had a negative impact on learners’ transition from preschool to lower primary, whereby teachers with large class size recorded higher drop out cases compared to teachers with small class size. The study further revealed that the choice of the teaching methods has a lot of impact on children’s learning and transition from one class to another. The study recommends that teacher to child ratio should be reduced to ensure there is intensive and interactive class activities, capacity building for teachers should be enhanced to improve on their teaching methods, teachers are encouraged to have a firm continuity of language of instruction as they introduce other foreign languages, the government is encouraged to invest more on the lower primary school as well as preschool since they give firm foundation for education and further studies can be done to find out how parental involvement can influence learners transition from preschool to primary school.
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the study

Access to primary education has dramatically increased across the majority of the world, following the introduction of free universal education in most part of the African countries. However, completion rate remains disappointing due to high drop out and repetition in the lower primary level. Children’s entry to primary school, adjustment and success in their lower primary level depends on the transition to primary school; this considers children’s readiness and school readiness for the children. (Arnold, Barlett, Gowani and Meralli, 2006; Fabian & Dunlop, 2007)

Le Rour (2002) noted that San children of Botswana dropped out of primary school at early age due to difficulties they experienced as they adjust to the conflicting values and the expectations placed on them between their language and the school. She also found out that those who retained in school are those who went through preschool system and identified that there was need for teachers to gain a socio-cultural understanding of marginalized cultures furthermore avoid rivalry between preschool and primary school.

Efforts to realize universal primary education have been marked progressively with the increasing access to primary schools and other levels of education; however pupil retention in primary schools remains a problem. Major challenges of the entire education spectrum include; management of teachers especially deployment and development of teachers and great reluctance to discipline absentee and the under-performing teachers, high level of teacher – child ratio as a result of shortage of experienced teachers, classrooms in some schools are overcrowded this brings in the issue of poor quality of education in public schools, training programs for teachers have been viewed unfit for the purpose of radical reforms, inadequate provision of educational infrastructure and the failure of the management to be accountable to the funds allocate to the schools (M.O.E, 2012).
The idea of “school readiness” is more than children’s abilities and early learning. It also has two other factors this includes; school readiness for the children and the family readiness for school. The two conditions ensure smooth transition for (3-6 years) preschool to lower primary school children (6-8 years). Internationally 6-8 year period is included as part of the early childhood development (ECD) and seen as a critical stage for children’s success in the integration to lower primary school and for their subsequent learning. The age group has not been considered by the policy makers and ECD specialists. The inclusion of young children from deprived environments with limited early stimulation is often being neglected in the new learning environment that they have cope with large classes and little learning material. (Sowe, 2012)

In Queensland education system the concept of effective transition has moved from “school readiness” of the child to other influences such as multiple structural factor- class grading, age of the child at entry, and recently considered the effects of changes in pedagogy in the early years of primary school for the child’s success at school. The transition from preschool to primary years centers on issues of development and the disadvantage of each child’s academic “readiness” towards formal schooling. Teacher’s role in developing applicable curriculum and pedagogy is an emerging factor that is crucial towards preschool-primary transition, therefore with the employment of early childhood specialists in the lower primary school as well as preschool so that they are able to provide continuity of pedagogy (Petriwskyj, 2005). In the study by Peter (2000), found that parents and teachers have viewed continuity from preschool to primary school as essential to the success of transition and further they saw that increasing structure in preschool curriculum and pedagogy has a providing continuity.

In the west and central Africa, the governments are working towards developing human capital, a country like Gambia in their vision 2020, has recognized that for them to reduce poverty, in their strategy they included free basic education in which their efforts have to start with the children. Making education readily available was part of the county’s vision, school readiness- a smooth transition from home to preschool, preschool to primary as a priority. Early childhood education has documented an improved school
readiness, a likelihood of increased enrollment to class 1, and minimal delays in enrollment, dropout and repetition and hence completion and achievement has increased. There has been challenges facing the West and Central African countries’ (Cameroon, Togo, Gambia, Senegal, Nigeria, DRC, among many) education system the high rate of dropouts and repetition in grade (class) 1 and 2 of the lower primary school. Just like Kenya has embraced the attachment of ECD centers to public primary schools, Gambia has offered increased access to ECD through the attachment of this centers to lower basic primary school, an integrated approach that has put in place sanitation, water, nutrition, health and protection of children between the age from birth to 6 years targeting the under-served regions and vulnerable groups (Sowe, 2012).

In Rwanda for the past 10 years has seen a success in improving access to primary education and almost achieving universal primary enrollment. The rate of primary enrollment has increased to 95.4% in 2010, while completion rate increased from 52.5% in 2008 up to 75.6% in 2010, placing Rwanda on track towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) related to education. Dropout rate at primary level was 12.2% by 2010 and repetition 14% this is an indicator showing that the school system fails a significant number of learners each year. International research demonstrates that when children access quality ECD services, they improve performance and internal efficiencies all through the school cycle. (Kigali, 2011)

In the East African countries, there has been a determination towards free UPE which has resulted to massive enrollment. In grade 1 the class sizes have ballooned with children of different ages. In Uganda’s statistics from the Ministry of Education before and after introduction of free UPE, it reveals that little completion rate has been realized despite the introduction of UPE. It has seen that, while Grade 1 enrollment has increased massively there is dramatic reduction by Grade 2. The negative trend is seen right through, with only half of the learners completing primary cycle. It’s clear that free education has failed to resolve this problem of access and retention, some these learners leave the school and never return, issues could be overcrowding in class, lack of furniture
and learning resources, and most of all untrained and disinterested teachers (UNESCO, 2005)

The introduction of FPE in Kenya in 2003, enhanced the access to education for children both boys and girls. Access to primary education was no longer a problem to children from the poor background. In this year primary school enrollment marked an increase by 17%. However, there exist some information that FPE has great impact on the enrollment of children in the ECD centers, a study carried out by KIE (2003), responses from 52 districts involved in the study, shows that the impact on ECD enrollment is all negative, about equal number of this districts reported declines in enrollment of ECD and increase in Primary school. Parents have refused to pay fees for ECD on the ground that it should too be free; lack of funding has led to loss of teachers and eventually closure of ECD services, since it entirely depends on parents’ contribution. Besides that there has been a gap in transition and retention for those children who gone through the ECD service and those whose parents took the straight to class one. (UNESCO, 2005)

Transition refers to that period of time before or after the child moves from either home or an ECD center into primary school or the passage from one level to the other. At this point children have varying experiences and demanding changes. In this case for transition to be smooth, children need to be prepared for school as well as the school need to be ready for the children. (Arnold et al., 2006)

In a study done by Njenga and Kabiru (2001) in Embu district which is near Thika-West district, shows that children tend to repeat in class 1 and 2 reasons being that there was difficulty in transition from preschool to primary school. The study states that children will come from preschools where the environment is child friendly and most of the learning is through play, oriented with play materials. However at primary school, these children are challenged by facing a learning environment that is characterized by formal learning, no learning material and fairly strict discipline. The lack of textbooks especially those that will assist in the literacy skills mainly the mother tongue exacerbates the situation. In this case most children in grade 1 and 2 end up repeating since they lack literacy skills that are required for them to proceed on to the next class. Data collected in
this study showed that those children who repeated in class 1 were cared for by untrained teachers; those taken care of by trained teachers were well prepared for transition to more formal educational system that is in primary school. It shows the high rate of repeating classes has a major reason behind learners dropping out of school; when this children are made to repeat classes quit a number of times tend to give up. Lack the motivation to learn hence academic performance deteriorate and more so they reach maturity while still in primary shy off when learning with younger children.

1.2. Statement of the problem

Readiness to the next level is paramount for the success of the child in the next level of education. Readiness and transition are closely linked. For a smooth transition, children must be ready for school. Schools must be ready for the children in terms of their physical environmental factors, continuity of language of instruction, methods of teaching; as well teachers’ level of training to handle the children must also be enhanced in relation to these crucial moments for the child (Arnold et al., 2006).

The idea of school readiness and transition is more than just children’s abilities and early learning, it has more to do with school readiness for the children, however schools are often not ready for children, they fail to provide an enabling environment for children to learn effectively and since teachers are the main stakeholders in the readiness for learners’ transition from preschool to primary school there is a major concern of the reason why children tend to disconnect when they move from preschool to primary school.

In Thika-west district according to a report released by the District Education Office by 24th May 2013, an analysis of transition from preschool to primary school shows that transition rate of 2012 was 41.78% transited to primary school where the preschool was attached, 29.7% transferred to other schools, 13.8% dropped out of school and 14.72% there well about is unknown.

It is therefore that this study was determined to analysis factors influencing learners’ transition from preschool to primary school.
1.3. Purpose of the study
The purpose of this research proposal was to determine factors influencing learners’ transition from preschool to primary school a case of public schools in Thika-west district, Kiambu County-Kenya.

1.4. Objectives of the study
The objectives of this study were as follows:

1. To assess the extent to which teachers’ level of training influences learners’ transition from preschool to primary school.
2. To determine the extent to which physical environmental factors influence learners’ transition from preschool to primary school.
3. To establish the extent to which language of instruction influence learners’ transition from preschool to primary school.
4. To determine the extent to which teaching methods influence learners’ transition from preschool to primary school.

1.5. Research Questions
This study was guided by the following questions:-

1. To what extent does teachers’ level of training influence learners’ transition from preschool to primary school?
2. To what extent do physical environmental factors influence learners’ transition from preschool to primary school?
3. How does language of instruction influence learners’ transition from preschool to primary school?
4. To what extent does teaching methods influence learners’ transition from preschool to primary school?

1.6. Significance of the study
This research project may contribute to the body of knowledge on factors that influence learners’ transition from preschool to primary level of education.
The study is hopeful to be of benefit to the schools management and administration in the influence of teachers towards smooth transition of learners from preschool to primary school.

It may also be of significance to teacher training institutions in the implementation of training program that will involve teachers in both levels of education i.e. preschool and primary school on how they can work together to enhance effective transition of learners. The study may be of significance to the Government in the inclusion of pre-primary education as part of the free education in order to enhance a smooth transition from preschool to primary, without skipping this crucial stage that marks the foundation of education.

1.7. Limitations of the study
The study faced several limitations as follows, in which the researcher got ways to overcome them:

The distance from one school to another was enormous and there no public means of transport, the researcher used other means like boarding a motorbike to get to these schools.

Access to attendance register that are usually stored beyond reach, looking for them needed more time, therefore the researcher needed someone to look for them.

Some head teachers’ and deputy head teachers had tight schedules, therefore the researcher had to book appointments with either of them prior to the visit.

1.8. Delimitation of the study
The study was conducted in Thika west district which is close to 40 km from Nairobi, Kenya’s capital city. The study involved only public schools since the government took initiative to offer FPE in the public school and again the ECD centers have now been attached to most public primary schools, according to statistics (D.E.O. 2013) Thika-West shows that it has more ECD centers attached to public primary schools within Kiambu county. The comparison based on other public primary school neighboring the district this includes; Ruiru and Thika-East which was part of the large Thika district before the division in 2010.
1.9. Assumptions of the study
The following assumptions were made:

i. The respondents would willingly spare some time to respond to the items in the questionnaire.

ii. The language of communication would not be a problem between the researcher and the respondent.

1.10. Definition of key terms
The following are operational definition of terms as used in this study:

Language of instruction- In this study it refers to the language used to instruct learners at preschool level and primary school and its continuity to the next level.

Learners- children confined in preschool and primary school.

Physical environmental factors- This are physical factors that determine smooth transition from preschool to primary school, this includes: teacher-child ration, play area, classroom equipment and location and suitability of the toilets.

Preschool- This is the level of education that marks the beginning of school for children between the age of 3-6 years.

Primary school- According to this study, this is the level of education that follows after preschool, includes children between the ages of 6 to 8 years in standard 1 to 3(lower primary)

Teachers’ level of training- Refers to the training given to teachers related to learners’ transition from preschool to primary school.

Teaching methods- The instructional methods used by the preschool and primary school teachers in the smooth transition and its continuity from one level to the other.

Transition- Refers to that period of time before or after the child moves from ECD center (preschool) into primary school.

1.11. Organization of the study
The study included Chapter One as the introduction which has the following sections, background of the study, statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, objectives of
the study, research questions, significance of the study, limitations of the study, delimitation of the study, assumptions of the study and the definition of key terms.

Chapter Two has literature review that discusses the factors that influence learners’ transition from preschool to primary school. These factors include: physical environment, language of instruction, teachers’ capacity and teaching methods.

Chapter Three is titled research methodology, which has the following sub-heading: introduction, Research design, Target population, sampling design, Research instruments, data collection procedure, data analysis and ethical conditions.

Chapter Four which is Data analysis, presentation and interpretation will include: analysis of the instrument as per the way the respondent give their responses, the analysis will be done using SPSS.

Chapter Five has the summary of findings, discussions, conclusion and recommendations for the study.
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction
This chapter has detailed literature related to factors influencing learners’ transition from preschool to primary. This factors include; Physical environment, teachers’ capacity, language of instruction and teaching methods. A conceptual framework is included to illustrate how each of these variables (independent variables) influences the dependent variable.

2.2 Overview of Early Childhood Development and Education (ECDE) and Primary Education in Kenya
The Kenyan government recognizes that early childhood development and education as an important aspect towards economic and social development of the country, since at this level of education children has an opportunity to fairer and good start in life (UNESCO,2005).

The establishment of National Center for Early Childhood Education (NACECE) and District Centre for Early Childhood Education (DICECE) it was for the strategic move in the harmonization of the ECDE curricula and provision of training ECDE teachers and caregivers. NACECE under Kenya Institute of Education (KIE) has taken initiative in the production of national ECDE curriculum/guidelines, which are meant to be utilized and implemented in the ECDE centers in the country. However these guidelines are not readily accessible to teachers in some ECDE centers especially those in the small and remote rural communities. In this case some of these teachers and ECDE managers argue that this guidelines are a bit expensive thus unable to buy the guidelines (Abagi, 2008).

Most of the public ECDE centers are in poor condition, they have unsatisfactory and un-stimulating environment for learning and catering for children’s individual needs. Though comparing to other African countries with the same levels of economy, Kenya has made a remarkable progress in the achievement of provision of early childhood education. Through the World Bank Kenya was awarded an important opportunity to
expand its vision on early childhood education. The focus was on teacher training and capacity building for the community in service delivery, the project placed emphasis on children’s health and nutritional needs including learning needs. The World Bank had another important legacy on its project initiative the reinforcement of linkage between early childhood program and formal schooling which had the extension of the ECDE age group to 8 years and above. However the gaps still exists in the implementation of the expanded vision of ECDE. (M.O.E, 2012).

The access and participation are still low at the ECDE level being that it is not included in the 8-4-4 system of education in Kenya. The net enrollment rate is seen of 42% in 2009 and 50% of 2010, though provision of ECDE has progressed this low enrollment is worrying. This shows that 58% and 50% of school going age of children were still not in school in these years. This low access is as a result of the fact that ECDE has not been confirmed compulsory in Kenya, despite that it lays foundation for subsequent performance in other levels of education (KIE, 2000).

Primary education in Kenya is essentially the first phase of formal education. It begins at the age of six years and it runs for eight years. The basic purpose of primary education in Kenya is to prepare children fully participate in the economic, political and social well-being. With the current primary education curriculum it is designed to provide children with more practical and functional education that will cater for their future either for those who finish at primary level and also those who proceed to secondary school.

The Kenyan government has recognized that provision of Universal Primary Education (UPE) has a milestone towards social and economic development. Most importantly it has established that by proving primary education to women, a society can accelerate its development. In January 2003, the government managed to actualize its plan of implementing free primary education (FPE) which has seen 17% increased enrollment of learners in public primary schools. There is existing information though not conclusive that FPE has impact on ECD enrollment that it has dropped since ECD was not included in the initiative especially in poorest and rural areas. Many parents have avoided ECD and others send their children to pre-unit of preschool to prepare their children for
primary. Other areas parents are now keeping their children away from ECD until they are of age (6 years) that entitles them to free primary education. This means that children are unprepared to start formal schooling since ECD centers provide the child with holistic development prior to transition to primary school (Anon, 2003)

In this regard there is a proposal that has been made though not implemented that the government to provide one year free preschool education that will change the system of education from 8-4-4 to 1-8-4-4 system. This will prevent the complete collapse of preschool education as a crucial factor during transition period.

2.3. Concept of transition from preschool to primary school
Primary schooling has been seen as one of the crucial transitions in children’s life and major challenge of early childhood age. The initial success in school both intellectually and socially leads to honorable cycle of achievement and a critical factor that determine children’s adjustment to the experiences and demands of primary school environment, retention and future progress. Dunlop & Fabian (2007), propose that the ways through which transitions are enhanced and experienced will make a difference to the children in their early months to the new situation as well as long term effects since the extent through which they feel comfortable and successful in their first transition it’s likely to influence retention and completion of primary education.

Educational transition refers to the process of change where children move from one place or phase of education to the next over time. This changes their relationships, teaching styles, the environment, time, space, context of learning and the learning itself. The change children experience can bring about excitement of these new beginnings, eagerness to meet new people and make friends and the opportunity to learn other new things. However, there can be some elements of uneasiness or the fear of unknown which can result to confusion and anxiety, this may have a great impact in the child in future and others may drop out of school as early as grade 1 or even during the lower classes (Fabian & Dunlop, 2005).
Page (2000) in his opinion he suggest that, when we allow children to experience this discontinuity it will be seen as part of their continuum in life and a learning experience. Therefore if going through a transition for children is a learning skill then it’s important that the children be helped to build resilience to the change they will experience as well as be in a position to negotiate for the change.

Through the expansion of educational provision and childcare during the early years, this has led to an increased number of moves that children experience; therefore by the time they get to join formal schooling they have already attended several educational settings. Kienig (2002), raised concerns that starting school for children, may result to anxiety that can affect their emotional well-being and the long-standing social adjustment, this may hinder future learning. In this case if children emotional well-being of children is a significant factor for continuity of learning, then there is need to better the provision for transition hence will have fewer difficulties later in school. Lack of emotional well-being can have worrying effects and stress that can lead to fatigue, aggression or sometimes withdrawal, all of this can have a potential to impair the learning capacity of the children. The children can be disoriented, affected and inhibited hence resulting to some behavioral problems which can impact on their motivation, commitment and relationships (Fabian & Dunlop, 2007).

The changes in the environment, curriculum, resources, institutional culture, style of classroom interactions and pedagogical approaches may have potential impact in the way children respond to the first transition to primary school state Shaeffer (2006) that starting school for children it means they learning social values and rules of the school, as well as getting along with the changes in roles, identity and relationships.

2.4. Teachers’ level of training influencing learners’ transition from preschool to primary school

It is clear that teachers have a critical factor in children’s’ smooth transition from preschool to primary school as well as ensuring learning. Therefore it is important that quality teaching is embraced. Some factor that need to considered in teachers’ capacity...
include; communication between teachers in preschool and primary school, access to teaching and learning materials, level of training, preparation of learners and motivation.

Teachers in the lower classes in primary school are looked upon and viewed of less importance than those teaching in the higher classes. They are more unlikely to have had some specialized training to help them in the organization, management and teaching learners’ age ranging from 4 to 10 years as this is the age range of ECDE children. Teachers being the significant factor in the creation of effective classrooms are also crucial assets or main barrier when young learners begin formal education. It is important to consider having trusted teachers, motivated and conscientious, specially trained teachers who can support children’s emotional and social development and can promote and encourage learning. It’s not about inspection by the school head teachers and other ministerial supervisors but also they should receive as much support from them and other teachers. (Shaeffer, 2006; Odaga and Henevald, 1995; Bruns et al, 2003; UNESCO, 1998).

Arnold et al., (2006) states that the effectiveness in learning in mainly influenced by teachers’ status, competencies, skills and their access to teaching and learning resources these learning materials may include teachers’ guide books and relevant textbooks. In their study, they realized that most standard 1 and 2 teachers lack appropriate training that can be utilized to impart and nurture literacy skills that can help develop children’s writing and fluency in reading.

In the development of smooth transitions from preschool to primary school, it should be noted that, sharing of information and communication between preschool and primary school teacher should be an ongoing process (Barbour &Seefeldt, 1993). There should be sharing of information and joint preparation for children's transition to primary school, these can only be done through inter-staff communication before, during and after transition. Transfer of records that have information about children's levels of physical, Intellectual and social development and an estimation of children’s’ needs will be important during the exercise. Teachers visiting each other’s classrooms to talk about
children, cooperative planning on transition programs and networks, and other strategies that support programs continuity.

However the area of communication between teachers has been recognized as difficult and that it requires improved collaboration (Love et al., 1992; Renwick, 1984). The important factor is interconnectedness of preschool and primary school experiences which need to be known, tied with improved professional respect amid the preschool and primary school sectors (Edgar, 1986; Renwick, 1984).

It’s important to note that one of the crucial influences to learning is the set up to which it will occur. If the environment is familiar to children they are likely to adjust fast to the new experiences and expectations. In this case however children will still need to be prepared to make transition to primary school this helps the gain self-confidence and they are likely to succeed. Though the environment is the same, meaning that the preschool is attached to primary school, there is need for gradual preparation of preschool children as part of the transition program; this preparation will include some of the demands and challenges that children are likely to encounter in primary school, preparations should be done prior to and during the transition periods. (Boethel, 2004)

Children’s first experience before the commencing of learning in primary school, allows them time to interact with teachers in the preparation of challenges and positive change of people. When children have a series of visits in the next level of education they get an opportunity to learn what is expected of them, they familiarize with the environment this includes the play area, buildings and toilets. They also have opportunities to gain information about the differences between preschool and primary school; they can participate in other new class activities, practice new skills and interact with new friends. Preparation can also be done in preschool where the teachers exercise the delaying and reducing attention and praise, decrease prompts and instructions, enhance independence, giving children roles and responsibilities. (Fowler, 1982).

Teachers in the ECDE centers will work under a motivating environment, where by if their salaries are paid on time and in this case a reasonable pay therefore the aspect on transition of learners can be realized. However ECDE teachers especially in the rural
areas tend to be demotivated since they are lowly paid and in some cases they go for months without payment (three to four months). This happens since the parents are entitled to pay school fees in order to remunerate the teachers, most of this parent in the rural and slums areas they don’t see the essence of paying for ECDE while primary education is free (Abagi, 2008). Njenga and Kabiru (2001), teachers’ level of training determine smooth transition. In their study, the number of children in the class of the untrained teachers who dropped out of school during their first grade in primary school was six times that of trained teachers.

2.5. Physical environmental factors influencing learners’ transition from preschool to primary

The physical environment related to the study includes; the size of the classroom and its organization, teacher-child ratio, classroom equipment, location and suitability of the toilets and the play area. These are among the important factors that primary schools need in their readiness for children. However most schools are hardly ready for children, they fail to provide the necessary environment which will enable children in effective transition as well as learning. In countries like Kenya where free primary education policies has been implemented, the sizes in the classroom have drastically increased especially in standard 1(grade 1). These large classes at early years of learning interfere with the capacity of teachers in teaching and children to learn. (O’Sullivan, 2006).

Teaching children in grade 1 as many as 75 to 100+ is not as effective way in instilling the key skills and competencies that more critical in their later learning and success. Overpopulation in class is related to little no access to learning equipment and other learning materials which are most important and critical in the development of children’s basic skills and above all competencies. Studies show that it is difficult for one to learn to read without the necessary materials such as books, and more so it’s even hard to establish the most basic language and mathematical concepts without the required teaching aids. In some places they have introduced shifts and sometimes the shifts are triple in order to solve the problem of large classes, this has resulted to minimal contact hours which have a great impact in children’s development. (Abadzi, 2006).
According to Abagi(2008), most of the ECDE centers attached to public primary schools in Kenya share facilities such as toilets/latrines, the condition of these toilets are not suitable for the young children in preschool and the lower primary school. Such facilities are located like approximately 200 meters from the ECDE classroom; they are more nearer to primary school classes than the preschool classrooms. Children tend to drop out due to this challenge of access to this facility, since the latrines are in bad shape. To others, parents wait until they are of age and can manage to use this kind of latrines hence skipping the most important part of education the preschool level.

2.6. Language of instruction influencing learners’ transition from preschool to primary school

Language of instruction is an important factor in children’s learning experiences, in this case some of factor that are determined by language include; language of the catchment area, mother tongue, language in which instructional materials are written for example English and the national language for example Kenya- it’s Kiswahili.

Most children enter school unable to understand what the teacher says. In a country like Malawi, children between grade 1 and 4, experience the use of four languages, they include; Chichewa (Malawi’s national language), English that has been used to write instructional materials, teachers’ home language and the children’s home language. (Chilora, 2000; Chilora & Harris, 2001). In the study it was found that, children whose home language is similar to that of the teachers’ (even though the language of instruction is different) they tend to perform better in primary school.

Children tend to learn language very fast in their early years. They become competent communicators and fluent readers which can be accomplished initially by use of mother tongue where there is familiarity and vocabulary. However bilingual programs can be effective either official or unofficial, though this may be impossible where children belong to different languages. (Benson, 2005)

The use of appropriate language of instruction in the early years can help reduce dropout rate, this is by ensuring that teachers are trained to use local language in the early childhood years while teaching, this would mean children will have a better
understanding for starting primary school, hence retention since there will be academic progress (Hunt, 2008).

2.7. Teaching methods influencing learners’ transition from preschool to primary school

Teachers have a role in developing applicable curriculum and pedagogy as they are emerging crucial factors effective towards preschool-primary school transition (Dockett & Fleer, 1999; Patterson & Fleet, 1999).

Briggs and Potter (1999) recommended that the employment of early childhood specialist educators in the lower primary level as well as in preschool in order to provide continuity of pedagogy, they noted that some dramatic changes in teaching approaches could be more traumatic to children especially if they experience the difference at the transition period.

Katz (1996) emphasized that whatever young children learn, when and how they do it, should have to be addressed collectively in order to develop an appropriate pedagogical approach; MacNaughton and Williams (1998) stressed the significance of matching teaching approaches with educational vision grounded in a more clear value structure. When there is adequate support for pedagogical continuity with children as they move from preschool to primary school, there is need to have an environment that fosters teacher-child interactions. To manage this smaller classes are important, when there is a reduced number of children in a class this minimizes overcrowding hence ample time to given to each child by the teacher (Arnold et al., 2006).

It has been noted that it is important for early childhood and primary programs to focus on the continuity of pedagogy and methods all through the early childhood age range—that is, from infancy to 8 years, the continuity should be based on a very strong and fair partnership rather than ‘schoolification’. It is noted that most the grade 1 and 2 children would highly benefit from the learning materials that are commonly found in the ECD centers (UNESCO, 2006).

In some instances a closer linkage that can be seen between preschool and primary education is by building on strengths of both pedagogical methods for example children
in primary school can use child-centered method while those in preschool can focus on fostering children skills that will enable them succeed in primary (OECD, 2001).

While planning for pedagogical progress, it should be noted that it goes beyond ensuring curriculum and institutional coordination. Developers of curriculum and teachers need to consider individual differences in children, family background, previous experiences and abilities (Petriwskyj et al., 2005). Teachers need to be supported accordingly in order to understand as well as work with children taking them as unique individuals.

2.8. Theoretical framework

The conceptualization of the term transition is almost perpetually underpinned by the theories about child development, especially the development psychology. It’s important to note that development is the foundational concept for early childhood practice and policy. The development theories are necessarily engaged with the concept of transition, though not explicitly; all about it is the process of human beings’ growth, transformation and change. It is also conceptualized as moving from a series of approximate age stages (Woodhead, 2005).

Development is a wide ranging concept that permits multiple theoretical interpretation, this theories suggest different ways of understanding personal transitions. These theories include; Jean Piaget’s constructivist theory that has the most influence in the elaboration of human stage development, Lawrence Kohlberg (1981) is another notable theorist on moral development and personal and social development theorist Erik Erikson (1950) among others.

The stage development theory is well epitomized by the ideas of Piaget, since it has been mostly used by most educational theorists and some curriculum developers and planners. Early childhood development is a natural and a universal process of progress transformation or stage transformation in children’s moral, socio-emotional, mental/cognitive and physical competencies. Piaget (1978) envisaged these as a psychological stage process driven by equilibration process. His suggestion was that children develop what he called schemata that represent understanding of their surrounding and tend to assimilate the world to the developed schemata, unless too much of external contradiction
may force some change and result to re-equilibration of their view of world (Lourenco and Machado, 1996).

The implication of viewing child development as a series of psychological progressive process of transformation, from one stage to another, such as from infancy to maturity, is that these stages process is a crucial point of reference while discussing transition and retention of learners from preschool to primary school or else from informal curriculum to more formal. Lev Vygotsky, build on the development psychology, by focusing on social interaction, which emphasizes on activity rather than the individual. More dynamic in the vision of child development that offers relational view on transitions. In his socio-cultural point of view is that children’s environment whether in the home setting or preschool all the aspects of development are shaped by socio-cultural and economic processes. Vygotsky (1978) states that transition between learning and development will occur in the so called ‘zone of proximal development’, that refers to the distance between most difficult task children can perform with no help and that most difficult with support. Therefore it is through the instruction from adults, teachers and more informed peers that children can develop and learn.
2.9. Conceptual framework

**Independent Variable**

*Teachers’ Level of training:*
- Communication between teachers.
- Preparation of learners
- Motivation
- Access to teaching materials

*Physical Environmental factors:*
- Teacher-child ratio
- Class size and organization
- Location of latrine/toilets

*Language of instruction:*
- Language of catchment area (Mother tongue)
- National (Kiswahili)
- Official (English)

*Teaching Approaches/methods:*
- Child-centered
- Teacher-child
- Teacher-centered.

**Moderating Variable**

Learners’ performance

Successful Transition from preschool to primary:
- Improved class attendance
- Assimilation to school.
- Support learning
- Reduced dropout rate.

**Dependent Variable**

Learners’ background

Intervening variable

**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**
The conceptual framework illustrates the relationship between variables in this study. Variables include; independent variables, dependent variable, intervening variables and moderating variables.

Independent variable is one that the researcher makes changes in or manipulated in order to determine its effects or influence on the dependent variables (Kothari, 2004) In this study independent variable include; factors influencing learners’ transition and retention from preschool to primary school which are: Physical environment, Teachers’ level of training, Language of instruction and Teaching methods/approaches.

While dependent variable is an outcome of the influence of independent variable, it is the variable that is expected to change as a result of the presence or absence of the independent variables. In this study the variable that is expected to change is; ‘learners’ transition from preschool to primary school.

Intervening variables are factors which theoretically affect the observed phenomenon but cannot be seen; measured or manipulated they usually have to do with an individual, in this study ‘learners’ background’ is identified as an intervening variable.

Moderating variable is described as a second independent variable that has been selected for study in order to determine if it has effects or modifies the basic relationship between the primary independent variable and dependent variable (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2008). In this study, main moderating variable that has been identified is learners’ performance.

2.10. Gaps in literature

Literature gaps are seen in the way physical environment factors such as how play area in preschools has influence on transition; while in teachers’ level of training there has not been much on teachers’ motivation on influence towards transition. While on language of instruction there gaps in how second language such Kiswahili and other foreign language influence transition. On methods of teaching, the researcher sought to find out if there are influences on other methods of teaching a part from child-centered, teacher-child or activity oriented can influence transition.
2.11. Summary of the Chapter

As the factors outline in the literature there is much to what can influence learners transition from preschool to primary school, other factors that where encountered included parent and family have an influence in their child’s transition and retention. All in all main factors of this study included; physical environment that has teacher-child ratio, classroom size and organization, class equipment, location of toilets/latrines and the play fields which was not well outline in the other studies done. Teachers capacity came out clearly that teachers motivation though vividly has a lengthy influence on children’s transition, levels of training was that with untrained teacher there is high dropout unlike the class with a trained teacher, while access to learning and teaching materials as well as preparation of learners to formal schooling has been given more details on how they influence learners transition. Pedagogical methods have an influence in the learners’ transition, since if there is no continuity in them then there will be gaps in learning. Lastly, language of instruction needs continuity and other languages should be introduced to the child gradually.
CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter represents the methodology that was employed by the study. This chapter describes the research design, target population, sample size and sampling procedure, research instruments; validity and reliability of the instruments, procedure for data collection, data analysis and ethical considerations of the study.

3.2. Research Design

Orodho (2004) defines research design as the scheme or plan that is used to generate answers to research problems, while Kothari (2004) defines it as the blueprint for the collection, measurement and analysis of data.

The study used descriptive survey design; Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) define survey as an attempt to collect data from members of a population in order to determine the current status of that population with respect to one or more variables. Kerlinger and Lee (2000) say that descriptive survey design is used widely to obtain data useful in evaluating present practice and in providing basis for decision.

Also survey design is concerned with gathering facts or obtaining pertinent and pre-use information concerning the current status of phenomenon and where possible draws conclusions from the facts discovered.

Descriptive survey was appropriate for gathering information on factors influencing learners’ transition from preschool to primary school.

3.3. Target Population

Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) define population as an entire group of individuals, events or objects having common observable characteristics while target population as an entire group a researcher is interested in and wishes to draw conclusion and generalize the results of the study.
Thika-West District has thirty public primary schools with preschool centers attached to these schools. The study involved all teachers in preschool classes and all teachers in lower primary classes in the selected schools. The study target comprised 190 lower primary teachers and 55 preschool teachers giving a total of 255 target population as shown on Appendix 4.

3.4. Sample size and sampling technique

This section presents the method that was used to determine the study sample size from which data was collected. It also describes the sampling technique that was used in selecting elements that were included as the subjects of the study sample.

3.4.1 Sample size

A sample size is a sub-set of the total population that is used to give the general views of the target population (Kothari, 2004). The sample size must be a representative of the population on which the researcher would wish to generalize the research finding; the study involved a sample size of 118 lower primary teachers and 35 preschool teachers giving a total of 153, as shown on Appendix 4.

3.4.2 Sampling technique

This is the act of selecting a suitable sample or a representative part of a population for the purpose of determining characteristic of the whole population (Frankel and Wallen, 2004). The study used probabilistic technique to obtain the study sample from the target population. Probabilistic technique is a sampling process in which each element of the population has an equal chance of inclusion in the sample (Orodho, 2004).

Census was used to select the schools these allowed the researcher to use cases that have required information. Sampling frame of public primary schools with preschools attached to them, primary and preschool teachers, was obtained from M.O.E. office of the District Education officer Thika West.

The researcher used Morgan and Krejcie (1970) Sample Size (Appendix 3) Table to obtain 118 and 34 sample sizes of lower primary teachers and preschool teachers
respectively. Through stratified proportional random sampling with strata of classes they teach and their gender in order to ensure that they were evenly represented then simple random sampling was used to select the sample giving a size of 152.

3.5. Research instruments

Research instruments, are tools used in the collection of data on the phenomenon of the study (Creswell, 2003). The study used a questionnaire (appendix 2) to gather information from the study respondents. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), a questionnaire is a list of standard questions prepared to fit a certain inquiry.

The questionnaire had both closed-ended questions and open-ended questions, where the closed-ended restricted the respondents to direct answers without further explanations and open-ended allowed a brief explanation of the options in the close-ended questions. The questionnaire was administered to the teachers selected to the sample size of this study.

3.5.1. Pilot Testing

Pilot testing involves a smaller version of a larger study that is conducted to prepare for the study or to field test the survey to provide a rationale for the design, describes Orodho (2004). Piloting involves pre-testing of the instruments to determine their validity and reliability. The researcher conducted a pilot study to test the instruments using a similar group of respondents but from a different district and then make necessary adjustment.

The researcher used a public primary school which has a preschool center attached to it in the neighboring district; this is Ngoliba primary school in Thika- East district. Using simple random sampling, the researcher selected 4 primary school teachers from the 6 lower primary school teachers and 1 preschool teacher from the 2 preschool teachers in the school. On responding to the instruments, the subjects were encouraged to make necessary corrections and adjustments of the instruments to increase their validity.

3.5.2. Validity of Research Instruments

Frankel and Wallen (2004) define validity as the appropriateness, correctness and meaningfulness of the specific inferences which are selected on research results. It is the
degree to which results obtained from the data analysis actually represent the phenomenon that is under study. This study used content validity, to ensure that the instruments covered the subject matter of the study as the researcher intended.

Kothari (2004) describes content validity as the extent to which a measuring instrument provides adequate coverage of the topic that is under study. To ensure content validity of the instruments, the researcher consulted research experts and peers undertaking the same program.

Research experts assisted in assessing the variables to be measured by the instruments, while the peers helped in determining whether the set of items were accurately representing the variables under study.

3.5.3. Reliability of the Research Instruments
Reliability is the degree of consistency that the instrument or tool demonstrates on repeat trials, such that apart from delivering accurate results, the measuring instruments must deliver similar results consistently after repeated trials (Leedy, 2000).

The reliability of the instruments was estimated through an internal consistency which involved the split half method. This method involved one testing session by administering the questionnaires to the pilot group thereafter splitting the items in the instruments into two halves that is odd and even numbered items. Odd numbered items were placed in one subset while even numbered placed in another subset. Each of this subset was treated separately and scored accordingly.

The questionnaire items were answered by the respondents in the pilot testing school where they were assigned arbitrary scores. The scores that were obtained were keyed into the SPSS software and using Spearman – Brown prophesy formula. A correlation coefficient of 0.711 was obtained which is reliable as recommended by Mbwesa, 2006 that correlation coefficient that falls above +0.7, then the instruments will be taken reliable and suitable for data collection.
3.6. Data Collection Procedure
Data collection procedure involved the researcher preparing a research proposal with the consultation of supervisor. The research proposal was then presented to a panel appointed by the University of Nairobi for approval and permission to collect data on the phenomenon of the study.

The researcher later obtained a letter of introduction from the University authority which was used to get a permit from the Ministry of Education, authorizing her to carry out the study. The researcher also obtained data of the schools (primary school with preschool attached) from the Ministry of Education, Thika –west District.

The researcher later visited the selected primary schools to seek permission from the Head teachers to use their schools for the study.

3.7. Data Analysis Technique and Presentation
According to Orodho (2004), data analysis is the process of systematically searching and arranging interview scripts, field notes, data, questionnaires and other materials from the field with the aim of obtaining answers to research questions.

After data collection exercise, the raw data obtained from the study was systematically organized and converted to numerical codes representing measurements of variables. The organized and well coded data was then analyzed through descriptive statistics, which is a technique that enables researchers to meaningfully describe data with numerical indices or in graphical form (Frankel and Wallen, 2004).

Data from the instruments was edited; coded and tabulated using statistical packages for social sciences (SPSS) then presented using percentages, frequency distribution tables and ANOVA statistics.

3.8. Ethical Consideration
The researcher exercised utmost caution while administering the data collection instruments to the respondents to ensure their rights and privacy are respected. Before the actual administration of the instruments, an explanation on the aim and the purpose of the study was explained to the respondents in the language they understand better.
The researcher sought the consent of the respondents before they provided any requirements for the study. To ensure confidentiality, the questionnaires were given numerical codes instead of names and no respondents were forced into the exercise.

The study findings were presented without any manipulation of data in favor of the researcher’s expectations.

3.9. Operational definition of variables
Operational definition of variables allows variables to be expressed in a measurable terms. The indicators to be measured for each variable are identified together with the measurement scale. As shown in the Table 3.1.
Table 3.1. Operational Definition of variables:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives/Research Questions</th>
<th>Independent Variables</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Measuring level</th>
<th>Data collection tools</th>
<th>Approach of analysis</th>
<th>Tools of analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To assess the extent to which teachers’ level of training influences learners’ transition from preschool to primary school.</td>
<td>Teachers level of training</td>
<td>Communication between teachers.</td>
<td>Ordinal</td>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>Descriptive Analysis</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Preparation of learners</td>
<td>Nominal</td>
<td></td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>Nominal</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Access to teaching materials</td>
<td>Nominal</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To determine the extent to which physical environmental factors influence learners’ transition from preschool to primary school.</td>
<td>Physical environmental factors</td>
<td>Teacher-child ratio</td>
<td>Ratio</td>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>Descriptive Analysis</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Class size</td>
<td>Interval</td>
<td></td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Location of latrines</td>
<td>Nominal</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Play area</td>
<td>Nominal</td>
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<tr>
<td>To establish the extent to which language of instruction influence learners’ transition from preschool to primary school.</td>
<td>Language of instruction</td>
<td>Mother tongue</td>
<td>Nominal</td>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>Descriptive Analysis</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>National language</td>
<td>Nominal</td>
<td></td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Official language</td>
<td>Nominal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To determine the extent to which teaching methods influence learners’ transition from preschool to primary school.</td>
<td>Teaching methods</td>
<td>Thematic method</td>
<td>Ordinal</td>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>Descriptive Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Child- centered</td>
<td>Ordinal</td>
<td></td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher-child</td>
<td>Ordinal</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher- centered</td>
<td>Ordinal</td>
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</table>
CHAPTER FOUR
DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATIONS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction
Presented in this chapter are the results of the study based on analysis of data collected from the field. The purpose of the study was to determine factors influencing learners’ transition from preschool to primary school a case of public schools in Thika-west district, Kiambu County. The study findings are presented based on the following research objectives:-

i. To assess the extent to which teachers’ level of training influences learners’ transition from preschool to primary school.
ii. To determine the extent to which physical environmental factors influence learners’ transition from preschool to primary school.
iii. To establish the extent to which language of instruction influence learners’ transition from preschool to primary school.
iv. To determine the extent to which teaching methods influence learners’ transition from preschool to primary school.

4.2 Questionnaire Response Rate
The study sample was 152 subjects, 118 lower primary school teachers and 34 preschool teachers. In order to answer the research questions, the study administered questionnaires where by the return rate was 114 from lower primary teachers and 32 from the preschool teachers adding up 146 responses. The study sample size of 152 was not realized, the response rate was 95.15 % which was considered adequate for analysis and conclusion.

Frankel and Wallen (2004), state that a response rate of above 95% of the respondent can adequately represent the study sample and offer adequate information for the study analysis and thus conclusion and recommendations. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) suggest further that for generalization a response rate of 70% and over are excellent.
4.3 Demographic Data of the Study Respondents

Data for the study was collected from 114 lower primary teachers and 32 pre-school teachers, giving a total of 146 respondents. Among them, 129 (88.4%) were females while 17 (11.6%) were males. Table 4.1 illustrates classification of teachers by gender.

Table 4.1: Teachers’ Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pre-school</td>
<td>Lower primary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>32</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1 shows that out of the 114 lower primary teachers, 17 (14.9%) were males while 97 (85.1%) were females. Among the pre-school teachers, results show that all (100.0%) the teachers were females. This shows that there was gender imbalance among the pre-school and lower primary teachers in the sampled schools. This may be attributed to the reluctance of the male teachers to take up pre-school teaching job which may seem to them to be feminine. This confirms earlier researches done which revealed that most of the pre-school teachers or otherwise called caretakers were mostly women because they could nurture children and give them love, attention, care and other requirements (Rotumoi, 2012). In addition, mothers as first educators identify, recognize and respond to the children’s needs with more ease than men. Table 4.2 shows teachers’ age.
Table 4.2: Teachers’ Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pre-school</td>
<td>Lower primary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-30 yrs</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>56.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40 yrs</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50 yrs</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 and above</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Statistics in Table 4.2 indicate that 37 (25.3%) teachers’ were aged between 20 and 30 years, 49 (33.6%) were aged 31-40 years while 27 (18.5%) were aged 51 years and above. This implies that majority of the pre-school teachers were young compared with lower primary teachers. Table 4.3 depicts teachers’ professional qualification

Table 4.3: Teachers’ Professional Qualification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional qualification</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pre-school</td>
<td>Lower primary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECD</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P1 and ECD</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATS I</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results presented in Table 4.3 illustrates that all (100.0%) the pre-school teachers had attained Early Childhood Education while majority (53.5%) of the lower primary teachers had attained P1 qualifications. This implies both pre-school and lower primary teachers were well qualified to provide learners with enriched learning environment to nurture their social skills and values and also prepare them with ‘long life’ learning.
4.4 Influence of Teachers’ Level of Training on Learners’ Transition from Preschool to Primary School

Quality of a teacher is one of the most important factors affecting learning. As such it is vital to the learners’ achievement and progression from one level to another. Learning effectiveness to a large extent depends on the training of the teacher who in this case is the facilitator of learning and transmitter of knowledge. Thus, teachers’ training is crucial point indeed in transition of learners from pre-school to lower primary. In this view, the first objective of the study sought to assess the extent to which teachers’ level of training influences learners’ transition from preschool to primary school. To address this objective, study respondents were first asked to indicate whether they had received any training in relation to learners’ transition process from pre-school to lower primary. Table 4.4 illustrates their responses.

Table 4.4: Number of Teachers Trained on Learners’ Transition Process from Pre-School to Lower Primary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ever received any training related to transition</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pre-school</td>
<td>Lower primary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>75.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 4.4, 75.0% of the pre-school teachers had received training on transition while 25.0% of them had not received any training. Among the lower primary teachers, 54.4% had received training whereas 45.6% of them had not received training. This implies that majority of the teachers had received training on learners’ transition from pre-school to lower primary. However, it emerged that the number of pre-school teachers trained on learners’ transition was slightly higher compared with lower primary teachers. Table 4.5 shows topics covered during the training.
Table 4.5: Topics Covered During the Training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics covered during training</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pre-school</td>
<td>Lower primary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication with preschool/primary school teachers</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>31.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation of learners from preschool to primary school</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>43.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other areas of training related to transition of learners</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never received training related to transition</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>32</strong></td>
<td><strong>114</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.5 illustrates that majority of the teachers (43.8% pre-school teachers and 36.8% lower primary teachers) were trained in preparation of learners from pre-school to primary school. In addition, 31.3% of the pre-school teachers and 11.4% of the lower primary teachers were trained on communication with preschool/primary school teachers. These results were supported by Barbour & Seefeldt, (1993) who stated that in the development of smooth transitions from preschool to primary school, it should be noted that, sharing of information and communication between preschool and primary school teacher should be an ongoing process. Also there should be sharing of information and joint preparation for children's transition to primary school, these can only be done through inter-staff communication before, during and after transition. Table 4.6 illustrates ways in which teachers prepare learners for transition from pre-school to lower primary.
Table 4.6: Ways of Preparing Learners Transition from Preschool to Lower Primary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ways of preparing learners</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pre-school</td>
<td>Lower primary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>f</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity to visit primary class</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interact with primary teachers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposure to new class activities and practices</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>56.3</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhance learners independence</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.6 shows that majority of the preschool and lower primary teachers prepared learners for transition by exposing them to new class activities and practices.

To establish the influence of teachers’ level of training on learners’ transition from preschool to lower primary, the researcher first determined the difference between the number of learners enrolled in pre-school in years 2010, 2011 and 2012 against the number of learners who transited to primary school in years 2011, 2012 and 2013 respectively. Table 4.7 illustrates the number of learners who dropped out of the school from year 2010 to 2013.
Table 4.7: Number of Dropouts from Year 2010 to 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of dropouts</th>
<th>No. of teachers</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>146</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 4.7, the number of dropout registered from 2010 to 2013 ranged from 0 to 17. Twelve (8.2%) teachers indicated that they did not record any drop out case within the selected period, 28 (19.2%) recorded 1-3 cases, 83 (56.8%) registered 4-9 learners while 23 (15.8%) recorded a range of between 10 learners and 17. This implies that majority of teachers registered learners’ drop out cases ranging between 4 and 9. The major factors which influenced 100% transition rate of learners were; class repetition, school dropout and learners’ transfer from one school to another. Table 4.8 shows learners’ dropout mean deviations from year 2010 to 2013 against teachers’ training.
Table 4.8: Teachers’ Training and Learners’ Dropout (2010-2013)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ever received any training related to transition</th>
<th>No. of teachers</th>
<th>Drop out mean deviations</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>7.93</td>
<td>3.682</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>3.064</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>146</strong></td>
<td><strong>5.68</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.820</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.8 shows that there were differences in mean scores obtained by teachers trained on learners’ transition and those who were not trained on transition. Results show that trained teachers obtained a mean deviation of 4.10 while untrained teachers obtained a mean deviation of 7.93. This implied that teachers trained on learners’ transition registered low dropout cases whereas untrained teachers registered higher dropout cases. To verify these findings, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted with the dependent variable being learners’ drop out rate from year 2010 to 2013 and the independent variable being the teachers’ level of training on learners’ transition. Table 4.9 shows results of the analysis.

Table 4.9: ANOVA Statistics on Teachers’ Level of Training versus Learners’ Transition from Pre-School to Lower Primary School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANOVA statistics</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>518.078</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>518.078</td>
<td>46.692</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>1597.791</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>11.096</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>2115.870</strong></td>
<td><strong>145</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Significant at p<0.05 level

As shown in Table 4.9, ANOVA test results revealed that teachers’ level of training had a significant influence on learners transition from pre-school to lower primary, at p<0.05 level. As reflected in Table 4.8, trained teachers recorded low dropout cases compared
with the untrained teachers. In agreement with the findings, Njenga and Kabiru (2001) found out that teachers’ level of training determine smooth transition. In their study, the number of children in the class of the untrained teachers who dropped out of school during their first grade in primary school was six times that of trained teachers.

4.5 Extent to which Physical Environmental Factors Influence Learners’ Transition from Pre-school to Primary School

The second objective of the study was to determine the extent to which physical environmental factors influence learners’ transition from pre-school to lower primary school. To answer this objective, the researcher asked the study respondents to indicate teacher-child ratio in the class. Presented in Table 4.10 are their responses.

Table 4.10: Teacher-Children Ratio in Class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher-children ratio</th>
<th>Pre-school</th>
<th>Lower primary</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>f</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:20-40</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>81.3</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:41-60</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:61-80</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As indicated in Table 4.10, majority (81.3%) of the pre-school teachers stated that teacher-child ratio in their classes was 1:20-40 whereas most (61.4%) of the lower primary teachers reported that the ratio was 1:41-60. This implies that in lower primary, children were overcrowded in the classroom and therefore teachers were not in a position of delivering the subject content to every child. The results may also imply that there was little or no access to learning materials among learners in lower primary due to overpopulation in the classroom. Consequently, this would lead to poor development of learners basic skills, which eventually would translate to poor progression rate in the school. Table 4.11 illustrates teachers’ ratings of influence of teacher–child ratio on transition from preschool to primary school.
Table 4.11: Rate of Influence of Teacher–Child Ratio on Transition from Pre-School to Lower Primary School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influence of Teacher–Child Ratio</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pre-school</td>
<td>Lower primary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good influence</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>31.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average influence</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>43.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weak influence</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>32</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.11 shows that majority of the teachers (63.7%) were of the views that teacher–child ratio had an average influence on learners’ transition from pre-school to lower primary.

Table 4.12 shows the mean differences of learners’ dropout rate from year 2010 to 2013 across teacher-child ratio.

Table 4.12: Differences in Teacher–Child Ratio on Learners’ Transition from Pre-School to Lower Primary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher-child ratio in class</th>
<th>No. of teachers</th>
<th>Drop out mean deviations</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1:20–40</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>4.54</td>
<td>4.079</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:41–60</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>6.28</td>
<td>3.317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:61–80</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9.43</td>
<td>2.936</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>146</strong></td>
<td><strong>5.68</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.820</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The findings in Table 4.12 shows that 63 teachers who indicated that teacher–child ratio in class was 1:20–40 obtained a mean deviation of 4.54 on learners transition from pre-school to lower primary, 76 teachers who stated that the ratio was 1:41–60 obtained a mean deviation of 6.28 whereas 7 teachers who stated that the ratio was 1:61–80 scored
9.43. This shows that teachers with large class size recorded higher drop out cases compared to teachers with small class size. This means that teacher–child ratio had an influence on learners’ transition from pre-school to lower primary. To verify these results, the researcher conducted one way ANOVA and the results of the analysis are presented in Table 4.13.

**Table 4.13: ANOVA Statistics on Teacher–Child Ratio on Learners’ Transition from Pre-School to Lower Primary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANOVA statistics</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>207.307</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>103.654</td>
<td>7.766</td>
<td>.001*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>1908.562</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>13.347</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>2115.870</strong></td>
<td>145</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Significant at p<0.05 level

ANOVA results showed that teacher-child ratio had a significant influence on learners’ transition from pre-school to lower primary, at p<0.05 level. As depicted in Table 4.12, teachers’ with large class size recorded higher dropout cases compared to those with small class size. This shows that overpopulation in the classroom had a negative impact on learners’ transition from pre-school to lower primary. Consistent with the results, O’Sullivan, (2006) established that large classes interfere with the capacity of teachers to teach and children to learn. This is because overcrowding leads to little or no access to the learning materials which are critical for the development of basic skills and competencies. This as a result influences learners’ transition rates from one level to another and therefore increases the drop out cases.

### 4.6 Extent to which Language of Instruction Influence Learners’ Transition from Pre-school to Primary School

The language of instruction is a key factor in children’s early learning experiences (Abdazi, 2006; Benson, 2005). In this view, the third objective of the study sought to
establish the extent to which language of instruction influence learners’ transition from pre-school to lower primary school. To address this objective, pre-school and lower primary teachers were asked to indicate language they used while delivering subject content in the classroom. Presented in Table 4.14 are their responses.

### Table 4.14: Language of Instruction used by Teachers in the Classroom

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language of instruction</th>
<th>Pre-school</th>
<th>Lower primary</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>f</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiswahili</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>71.9</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>32</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Findings presented in Table 4.14 indicates that 23 (71.9 %) pre-school teachers said that they used Kiswahili as a language of instruction in classroom while 9 (28.1%) said that they used English. On the same note, 94 (82.5%) lower primary teachers used Kiswahili whereas 20 (17.5%) used English. This clearly suggests that most of the teachers (pre-school and lower primary) used Kiswahili as a language of instruction in the classroom.

The results of the analysis further revealed that none of the teachers used mother tongue while teaching. According to Hunt, (2008) the use of appropriate language of instruction in the early years can help reduce dropout rate, this is by ensuring that teachers are trained to use local language in the early childhood years while teaching, this would mean children will have a better understanding for starting primary school, hence retention since there will be academic progress.

Table 4.15 shows difference in means among teachers who used Kiswahili as a language of instruction in classroom and those who used English.
Table 4.15: Difference in Means among Teachers who used Kiswahili as a Language of Instruction in Classroom and those who used English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language of instruction</th>
<th>No. of teachers</th>
<th>Drop out mean deviations</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kiswahili</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>6.88</td>
<td>3.273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>.889</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>5.68</td>
<td>3.820</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.15 shows that teachers who used Kiswahili as a language of instruction in classroom obtained a dropout mean deviation of 6.88 on learners’ transition from pre-school to lower primary while those who used English obtained a mean deviation of 0.83 on the same. This implies that there was a great difference in transition rate among learners whose teachers’ used Kiswahili and those who used English as a language of instruction in the classroom, meaning language of instruction had an influence on learners’ transition. Table 4.16 illustrates ANOVA statistics on language of instruction versus learners’ transition from pre-school to lower primary.

Table 4.16: ANOVA Statistics on Language of Instruction versus Learners’ Transition from Pre-School to Lower Primary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANOVA statistics</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>851.407</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>851.407</td>
<td>96.960</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>1264.463</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>8.781</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2115.870</td>
<td>145</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Significant at $p<0.05$ level

Based on the ANOVA test, results of the analysis revealed that teachers’ language of instruction had a significant influence on learners’ transition from pre-school to lower primary, at $p<0.05$ level. As depicted in Table 4.15, the results of the analysis revealed
that teachers who used Kiswahili as a language of instruction recorded low transition rates compared to those using English. This clearly shows that language of instruction positively or negatively influences students’ learning. In agreement with the findings, previous researchers found that the use of unfamiliar languages forced primary teachers to use ineffective and teacher-centered methods which undermine pupils’ learning (Alidou, Boly, Brock-Utne, Diallo, Heugh and Wolff, 2005).

4.7 Extent to which Teaching Methods Influence Learners’ Transition from Preschool to Primary School

Killen (2004), states that teaching methods provide a framework for orderly organization and presentation of instructional activities. A proper understanding of these methods and some of the factors related to their selection is a pre-requisite for good teaching. Teachers’ methodology is a sufficient actor in facilitating the implementation of the intended aims and expressed objectives. The fourth objective of the study was to determine the extent to which teaching methods influence learners’ transition from preschool to primary school. To respond to this objective, study respondents were asked to indicate teaching methods they used in the classroom and their responses were as shown in Table 4.17.

Table 4.17: Teaching Methods used by Pre-School and Lower Primary Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching methods</th>
<th>Teachers Pre-school</th>
<th>Teachers Lower primary</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>f</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thematic integrated</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>56.3</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child-centered</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher-child</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>32</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>114</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From the results presented in Table 4.1, it can be observed that 56.3% of the pre-school teachers used thematic integrated method, 34.4% used child centered while 9.4% used teacher-child method. Of the 114 lower primary teachers’, 21.9% used thematic integrated, 63.2% used child-centered while 14.9% used teacher-child. Based on these findings, it emerged that majority of the pre-school teachers used thematic integrated method whereas most of the lower primary school teachers employed child centered. In line with the findings, Nik Aisah (2005) found out that most of the teachers had a positive perception towards implementation of thematic approach in the teaching and learning process. This is because thematic instruction provides an effective way to contextualize instruction. It incorporates a concrete learning by-doing orientation and has the potential to facilitate cooperative and interactive learning opportunities in the classroom (Henderson & Landesman, 1995). However, according to Killen (2005) learner centered approach motivate learners and teaching them how to learn, it also has the added advantage of helping them to remember easily what they have learned. This method also caters for individualized learning. Bishop (1986) observes that individual learn in different ways, at different rates and for different purposes. Learner centered methods of teaching therefore help teachers identify individual abilities and weaknesses and deals with each appropriately.

To support the above findings, Piaget’s theory suggests that the teaching methods and materials should be consistent with the children’s level of conceptual development. This is because children develop what he called schemata that represent understanding of their surrounding and tend to assimilate the world to the developed schemata. Furthermore, it is through the instruction of teachers and peers children learn and develop (Piaget, 1978). Table 4.18 illustrates influence of teaching methods on learners’ transition from pre-school to lower primary.
Table 4.18: Influence of Teaching Methods on Learners’ Transition from Pre-School to Lower Primary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching methods</th>
<th>No. of teachers</th>
<th>Drop out mean deviations</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thematic integrated</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>3.910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child-centered</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>6.71</td>
<td>3.448</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher-child</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5.80</td>
<td>3.473</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>146</strong></td>
<td><strong>5.68</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.820</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results in Table 4.18 demonstrate that 43 teachers using thematic integrated method obtained a dropout mean deviation of 3.63, 83 teachers using Child-centered obtained a mean deviation of 6.71 whereas 20 teachers using teacher-child method obtained a mean deviation of 5.80. This implies that teachers employing thematic integrated strategy registered the lowest drop out cases, followed by teachers employing teacher-child method and finally those using child-centered method. Table 4.19 shows Analysis of Variance tests on influence of teaching methods on learner’s transition from pre-school to lower primary.

Table 4.19: ANOVA Statistics on Influence of Teaching Methods on Learner’s Transition from Pre-School to Lower Primary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANOVA statistics</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>269.563</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>134.782</td>
<td>10.439</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>1846.307</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>12.911</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>2115.870</strong></td>
<td><strong>145</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Significant at $p<0.05$ level
ANOVA test results shows that teaching methods had a significant influence on learner’s transition from pre-school to lower primary, at $p<0.05$ level. In agreement with the findings, Briggs and Potter (1999) noted that some dramatic changes in teaching approaches could be more traumatic to children especially if they experience the difference at the transition period. This therefore shows that teaching methodologies used by teachers are very essential in children transition from pre-school to lower primary.
CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction
This section provides summary of findings, conclusion and recommendations based on the study findings. It also gives areas for further research.

5.2 Summary of Findings
The main goal of the study was to determine factors influencing learners’ transition from preschool to primary school a case of public schools in Thika-West district, Kiambu County. The study found out that teachers’ training had a significant influence on learners’ transition from preschool to primary school. The study established that teachers trained on learners’ transition registered low dropout cases whereas untrained teachers registered higher dropout cases. In agreement with the findings, Njenga and Kabiru (2001) found out that teachers’ level of training determine smooth transition. In their study, the number of children in the class of the untrained teachers who dropped out of school during their first grade in primary school was six times that of trained teachers.

ANOVA test results showed that teacher-child ratio had a significant influence on learners’ transition from pre-school to lower primary, at $p<0.05$ level. Results of the analysis revealed that teachers with large class size recorded higher drop out cases compared to teachers with small class size, meaning overpopulation in the classroom had a negative impact on learners’ transition from pre-school to lower primary. Consistent with the results, O’Sullivan, (2006) established that large classes interfere with the capacity of teachers to teach and children to learn. This is because overcrowding leads to little or no access to the learning materials which are critical for the development of basic skills and competencies. This as a result influences learners’ transition rates from one level to another and therefore increases the drop out cases.

The study found out that pre-school and lower primary teachers used English and Kiswahili as a language of instruction. The study findings revealed that teachers who
used Kiswahili as a language of instruction in classroom recorded higher drop out cases compared to those who used English. This shows that teachers’ language of instruction had a great influence on learners’ academic progress. In agreement with the findings, previous researchers found that the use of unfamiliar languages forced primary teachers to use ineffective and teacher-centered methods which undermine students’ learning (Alidou, Boly, Brock-Utne, Diallo, Heugh and Wolff, 2005).

The study findings showed that teaching methods had a significant influence on learner’s transition from pre-school to lower primary. Teachers using thematic integrated teaching method registered the lowest drop out cases, followed by teachers employing teacher-child method and finally teachers using child-centered method. In line with the findings, Briggs and Potter (1999) noted that some dramatic changes in teaching approaches could be more traumatic to children especially if they experience the difference at the transition period. This therefore shows that teaching methodologies used by teachers are very essential in children transition from pre-school to lower primary.

5.3 Discussions of the Findings
5.3.1 Influence of Teachers’ Level of Training on Learners’ Transition from Preschool to Primary School

In relation to this objective, the study found out that teachers’ training had a significant influence on learners’ transition from preschool to primary school. The study established that teachers trained on learners’ transition registered low dropout cases whereas untrained teachers registered higher dropout cases. This was confirmed by 86 trained teachers who obtained a mean deviation of 4.10 while 60 untrained teachers obtained a mean difference of 7.93. This implied that trained teachers recorded low dropout cases compared with the untrained teachers. In agreement with the findings, Njenga and Kabiru (2001) found out that teachers’ level of training determine smooth transition. In their study, the number of children in the class of the untrained teachers who dropped out of school during their first grade in primary school was six times that of trained teachers.
5.3.2 Extent to which Physical Environmental Factors Influence Learners’ Transition from Pre-school to Primary School

ANOVA test results showed that teacher-child ratio had a significant influence on learners’ transition from pre-school to lower primary, at $p<0.05$ level. Results of the analysis revealed that 63 teachers who indicated that teacher–child ratio in the class was 1:20-40 obtained a mean deviation of 4.54 on learners transition from pre-school to lower primary, 76 teachers who stated that the ratio was 1:41-60 obtained a mean deviation of 6.28 whereas 7 teachers who stated that the ratio was 1:61-80 scored 9.43. This shows that teachers with large class size recorded higher drop out cases compared to teachers with small class size, meaning overpopulation in the classroom had a negative impact on learners’ transition from pre-school to lower primary. Consistent with the results, O’Sullivan, (2006) established that large classes interfere with the capacity of teachers to teach and children to learn. This is because overcrowding leads to little or no access to the learning materials which are critical for the development of basic skills and competencies. This as a result influences learners’ transition rates from one level to another and therefore increases the drop out cases.

5.3.3 Extent to which Language of Instruction Influence Learners’ Transition from Pre-school to Primary School

The study found out that most of the teachers (pre-school and lower primary) used Kiswahili as a language of instruction in the classroom. However, the study findings revealed that teachers who used Kiswahili as a language of instruction in classroom obtained a dropout mean deviation of 6.88 on learners’ transition from pre-school to lower primary while those who used English obtained a mean deviation of 0.83 on the same. This implies that there was a great difference in transition rate among learners whose teachers’ used Kiswahili and those who used English as a language of instruction in the classroom, meaning language of instruction had an influence on learners’ transition. In agreement with the findings, previous researchers found that the use of unfamiliar languages forced primary teachers to use ineffective and teacher-centered
methods which undermine students’ learning (Alidou, Boly, Brock-Utne, Diallo, Heugh and Wolff, 2005).

5.3.4 Extent to which Teaching Methods Influence Learners’ Transition from Preschool to Primary School

Based on the study findings, it emerged that 43 teachers using thematic integrated teaching method registered the lowest drop out cases, followed by 20 teachers employing teacher-child method and finally 83 teachers using child-centered method. This clearly demonstrates that teaching methods had a significant influence on learner’s transition from pre-school to lower primary. In line with the findings, Briggs and Potter (1999) noted that some dramatic changes in teaching approaches could be more traumatic to children especially if they experience the difference at the transition period. This therefore shows that teaching methodologies used by teachers are very essential in children transition from pre-school to lower primary.

5.4 Conclusions of the Study

Based on the findings of the study as summarized above, the study concludes that teachers’ level of training, physical environment, language of instruction and teaching methods were the major factors influencing learners’ transition from pre-school to lower primary. The study established that untrained teachers registered higher drop out cases compared with the trained teachers. This is because untrained teachers lacked the necessary skills to handle the children’s learning hence negatively influencing their transition from preschool to lower primary. There is therefore a need for such teachers to undertake the in-service training courses to refine their skills teaching and transition process. In addition to this, the study found out that overpopulation in the classroom had a negative impact on learners’ transition from pre-school to lower primary, whereby teachers with large class size recorded higher drop out cases compared to teachers with small class size. More so, choice of the teaching methods has a lot of impact on a children learning and transition from one class to another. The study therefore, concludes that teachers should be well prepared and equipped with the relevant knowledge and skills during their training so as to be able to prepare the children for a worthwhile future.
They should also be in a position of employing the best language of instruction to deliver subject content appropriately.

5.5 Recommendation of the Study

The following are recommendations of the study based on the study findings:-

i. In-service training courses should be organized to refine and update teacher’s skill on learners’ transition from pre-school to lower primary.

ii. There is need for greater cooperation and communication between pre-schools and primary school teachers to ensure continuity of programs and sharing of best practices.

iii. The researcher recommends that strategies should be enhanced for lower primary classes to be smaller this will ensure clear and consistent classroom activities that are intensive and interactive in practice.

iv. The government to put across a policy to invest more in the lower primary and preschool classes and emphasize on the benefits of a firm foundation will have on the upper classes.

v. Teachers to attended short course training to Improve their knowledge and skills in the use of teaching methods appropriate for young learners that is methods that ensure an orderly approach to learning new tasks.

vi. Teachers are recommended to have continuity in the use of language of the catchment area such as Kiswahili is highly encouraged especially when used during these formative years of the children this are the age of preschool and lower primary, prior to introducing other foreign languages.

5.6 Suggestion for Further Research

Arising from the study, the following areas for further studies are proposed:-

1. The current study only focused on school factors influencing learners’ transition from pre-school to lower primary. There is therefore a need to conducted another study to determine how parental involvement in child learning influence transition from pre-school to lower primary.

2. Future studies should apply different research instruments like focus group discussion to involve respondent in discussions in order to generate detailed information which would help improve transition programs in schools.
REFERENCES


Nkinyangi,S. (2005) *Challenges of Implementing Free Primary Education in Kenya: Experiences from the Districts*. The reports retrieved from UNESCO Nairobi susan.nkinyangi@unesco.unon.org


JUDY W. MUREITHI
P.O. BOX. 6585,
THIKA.

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: REQUEST TO COLLECT DATA FOR RESEARCH PROJECT:
I am a student at the University of Nairobi, pursuing a Master’s degree of Arts in Project Planning and Management. I’m carrying out a research on “Factors influencing learners’ transition from preschool to primary school in Thika West district.”
I hereby seek your permission to carry my study in your school as it has been randomly selected to the sample.
I will be involving your teachers in filling in of questionnaires and responding to focus group discussion guide this are the research tools that will be used to collect the data required. Responses given by the teachers will be treated with at most confidentiality.
There will be no name of school or respondent required. A copy of the final report will be made available to you on request.

Thank you in advance.

Yours faithfully,

Judy W. Mureithi
L50/70053/2011
APPENDIX 2

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

The purpose of this questionnaire is to get your view on how you influence learners’ transition from preschool to primary school. Please read each statement carefully and complete every part of the questionnaire as instructed.

The information that you provide will be treated with strict confidence. Your honest opinions will be of importance for the success of this research.

Do not write your name or that of your school on this questionnaire.

Please put a tick [  ] against the appropriate response that applies to you.

SECTION A

PERSONAL DETAIL:

Your age:

i. 20-30 [  ]

ii. 31-40 [  ]

iii. 41-50 [  ]

iv. 51-Above[  ]

Gender: Male [  ] Female [  ]

What is your professional qualification?

i. P1 [  ]

ii. ECD [  ]

iii. P1 and ECD [  ]

iv. Others [  ] please specify………………………………

Which class do you teach? ……………………………………………………..
SECTION B: Influence of teachers’ level training on learners’ transition from preschool to primary school.

1. In the table below, indicate the number of children enrolled in preschool for each of the years given and the number that transited to class one in the following years:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year of preschool enrollment</th>
<th>Number of enrollment</th>
<th>Year of transition to primary</th>
<th>Number of transition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td></td>
<td>2011</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td></td>
<td>2012</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td></td>
<td>2013</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If learners didn’t transit 100% give reasons.

2. Have you received any training related to transition of learners from preschool to primary school? Yes [ ]              No [ ]

3. If yes, was the training related to;
   i. Communication with preschool/primary school teachers [ ]
   ii. Preparation of learners from preschool to primary school[ ]
   iii. Other areas of training related to transition of learners [ ]

   Specify …………………………………………………………………

4. How often do you communicate with preschool or primary school teachers in regard to learners’ progress?
   i. Weekly [ ]
   ii. Monthly [ ]
   iii. Termly [ ]
   iv. Rarely [ ]

5. What ways do you prepare learners for transition from preschool to primary school?
   i. Opportunity to visit primary class [ ]

60
ii. Interact with primary teachers  [  ]
iii. Exposure to new class activities and practices  [  ]
iv. Enhance learners independence  [  ]

6. What is your rate of motivation towards helping learners in transition?
   i. Well motivated  [  ]
   ii. Moderately motivated  [  ]
   iii. Not motivated  [  ]

7. How can you rate your access to teaching and learning materials?
   i. Very good  [  ]
   ii. Average  [  ]
   iii. No access  [  ]

SECTION C: Influence of physical environmental factors on learners’ transition from preschool to primary.

8. What is the teacher-child ratio in your class?
   i. 1:20-40  [  ]
   ii. 1:41-60  [  ]
   iii. 1:61-80  [  ]
   iv. 1: 81-100  [  ]

9. From your option above, what is the rate of influence of teacher-child ratio on transition from preschool to primary school?
   i. Good influence  [  ]
   ii. Average influence  [  ]
   iii. Weak influence  [  ]

10. What is the distance of latrines from the classroom?
     Far (200 meters away)  [  ]
     Not far (less than 200 meters)  [  ]

11. What is the condition of the latrines?
    i. Suitable for young children  [  ]
    ii. Not suitable for young children  [  ]
12. Does the distance of the latrine from classroom and their condition have an influence on transition from preschool to primary school?
   Yes [ ]  No [ ]

   If yes, how does it influence…………………………………………………………

13. How would you rate the suitability of play area for children in your school?
   i. Very good     [ ]
   ii. Good         [ ]
   iii. Poor        [ ]

14. Does the play area have an influence on learners’ transition from preschool to primary school?
   Yes [ ]  No [ ]

   If yes, how does it influence…………………………………………………………

SECTION D: Influence of language of instruction on learners’ transition from preschool to primary.

15. What is the language of instruction in your classroom?
   i. Mother tongue [ ]
   ii. Kiswahili    [ ]
   iii. English     [ ]

16. Is there continuity of language of instruction from preschool to primary school?
   Yes [ ]  No [ ]

17. Does the language of instruction interfere with learners’ transition from preschool to primary school?
   Yes [ ]  No [ ]

   If yes, how………………………………………………………………………………
SECTION E: Influence of teaching methods on learners’ transition from preschool to primary school.

18. Which method of teaching is commonly used in your classroom?
   i. Thematic integrated [ ]
   ii. Child-centered [ ]
   iii. Teacher-child [ ]
   iv. Teacher-centered [ ]

19. Is there continuity of methods of teaching from preschool to primary?
   Yes [ ] No [ ]

20. What is your rate of awareness on teaching and learning methods used in preschool/primary school?
   i. Very well [ ]
   ii. Good [ ]
   iii. Average [ ]
   iv. Poor [ ]
**APPENDIX 3**

Table for Determining Sample Size from a Given Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>S</th>
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<td>500</td>
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<td>6000</td>
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<td>86</td>
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<td>7000</td>
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<td>136</td>
<td>1100</td>
<td>285</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Note.—* $N$ is population size.

$S$ is sample size. (Krejcie and Morgan, 1970)
## APPENDIX 4

### SAMPLE SIZE FOR THE STUDY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRIMARY SCHOOLS</th>
<th>PRIMARY TEACHERS</th>
<th>SAMPLE PER SCHOOL (N)</th>
<th>PRESCHOOL TEACHERS (N)</th>
<th>SAMPLE PER SCHOOL (S)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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Source: Author, 2013
APPENDIX 5

RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION FROM D.E.O THIKA

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Telephone (067) 31398 / 31272 (D.I.)
FAX: (067) 31272
When Replying please quote

DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICE
THIKA WEST DISTRICT
P.O. BOX 262,
THIKA.

Ref: THK/ADM/250/VOL.II(5)

1st July 2013

All the Headteachers
Thika West Primary Schools

REF: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION – JUDY WAMAITHA MUREITHI

The above mentioned is a student at University of Nairobi. The office has authorized her to carry out research on “Factors influencing learners’ transition from pre-school to primary school”.

Please accord her the necessary assistance.

PURITY NGURE
FOR: DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICER
THIKA WEST
APPENDIX 6

RESEARCH PERMIT

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:

Prof./Dr./Mr./Mrs./Miss/Institution
Judy Wamaitha Mureithi
of (Address) University of Nairobi
P.O Box 6232-01000, Thika,
has been permitted to conduct research in

Location
Thika West

District
Central

Province

on the topic: Factors influencing learners’ transition from preschool to primary school. A case of public schools in Thika-West District, Kiambu County, Kenya.

for a period ending: 31st August, 2013,

Research Permit No. NCST/RCD/14/013/1067
Date of issue: 17th June, 2013
Fee received: KSH. 1000

Applicant’s Signature

For Secretary,
National Council for Science & Technology