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EXTENT FAMILY'S SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS INFLUENCE PUPILS TRANSITION FROM PRIMARY TO SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN LAIKIPIA WEST SUB-COUNTY KENYA.

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ABSTRACT

The key government priority on basic education in Kenya is attaining 100 percent transition rate from primary to secondary schools. In Laikipia West Sub-County for instance where the study was carried out, transition to secondary schools averaged at 54.9% from 2008 to 2015. Family's socio-economic factors are highlighted in literature as to undermine transition of pupils from primary to secondary schools. The purpose of the study was to determine the extent to which families' socio-economic factors influence pupils' transition from primary to secondary schools in Laikipia West Sub-county in Kenya. The study was carried out using *ex-post facto* research design. Data was collected using self-delivered questionnaire from a target population of 1064 respondents. The sample for the study was 411 respondents (280 teachers and 131 PTA chairpersons) in public primary schools in the area of study, selected through stratified random sampling and simple random techniques. Data was analyzed through simple regression at .05 alpha level using SPSS version 21.0. Findings from the study revealed that family's socio-economic factors were significantly influencing transition of pupils from primary to secondary schools (β= - .505) at 0.5 significance level. The study recommended that the government should encourage and support income generating activities in the rural areas to improve their income.

Keywords: Community factors, transition, primary to secondary school

INTRODUCTION

Formal education as an investment in human capital, an observation that rests on the premise that education yields unaccountable benefits in view of the fact that it increases people's productivity in socio-economic and political realms of development (Welch, 2001). However, education may not be as highly regarded compared to other key sectors of the economy such as agriculture,

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health, industry or transportation, but it is much more important to every aspect of community development (Barro & Lee, 1993).

Increased demand for education has made governments, organizations and individuals to invest substantial amount of their income on education (Lundvall, 1996). These investments yield both social and private returns. Social and private returns to investment in education vary from one level of education to another. According to World Bank (2001), social returns decrease with rise in level of education, while private returns increase with one's level of education. For this reason, investing in primary education is more beneficial to the society compared to secondary and tertiary education because it yields more private returns. The national rates of social returns to investment in education are important to education planners since they provide the rationale for public financing of a certain level of education through Social Demand Approach in education planning. The planning approach has been used to rationalize public financing of universal free primary education (Sianesi & Reenen, 2003).

In an effort to meet the rising demand for education, many developing countries allocate a higher proportion of their budget on education than other sectors of their economy (World Bank, 2011). The increased government expenditure on education has in turn caused a rapid increase in global enrolment at all levels of education. As a result, the global enrolment at primary school level rose from 400 million to 691 million representing 58% expansion rate (UNESCO, 2014). Secondary enrolment in the same period increased from 184 million to 544 million students which translated to 34% expansion rate.

In spite of the noted increase in enrolment, expected social returns to investment in education have not been fully realized due to high dropout and repetition rates. This wastage scenario has impacted negatively on transition rates across different education cycles. According to UNESCO (2012), transition from primary to secondary schools is higher in developed countries at almost 100%, compared to 30% in developing countries. The high transition in developed countries has been attributed to high government investment in education and high parents' disposable income (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2009).

Apart from declining public spending on basic education in developing countries, there are other factors that are associated with low rate of pupils' transition from primary to secondary schools. In Kenya for example, in spite of the FSE initiative, there is rising household poverty (RoK, 2009). This observation has been corroborated by studies done in Kenya. Frederickson, McManus and Shelton (2012) carried out a study on socio-economic factors influencing transition from primary to secondary school in developing countries. The study established that there is widespread household poverty, and limited parents' capacity to enroll their children in

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secondary schools since the unit cost of secondary education was higher than that of primary education.

In Laikipia West Sub-county whose primary schools are focused by the study, transition rates from primary to secondary schools from 2008 to 2016 averaged at 54.9%. This implies that in that period, more than 45% of primary school pupils did not proceed for secondary education. This means that there are risk factors undermining the government's efforts to attain 100% transition rate in the sub-county and the country at large which if not addressed may not augur well for the desired socio-economic development in the area.

Available literature by Kiumi and Chiuri (2005), Lolchuraki (2013), and Griebel and Berwanger (2006) shows that pupils' transition from primary to secondary schools in developing countries is impacted negatively by unfavorable socio-economic status of parents, for instance household poverty, parent's low level of education (which is a critical correlate of pupils' progress in school), gender preference at household level in favour of boys, and child labour.

The purpose of the study was to determine the extent to which family based socio-economic factors could be influencing pupils' transition from primary to secondary schools in Laikipia West Sub-county in Kenya.

The null hypotheses for the study tested at 0.05 alpha level was; Family based socio-economic factors have no statistically significant influence on pupils' transition from primary to secondary schools in Laikipia West Sub-county in Kenya.

Literature Review

In Sub-Saharan Africa, the greatest challenge in education is that of financing of the education (Mutiga, 2010). According to UNESCO (2011) developing countries operate with huge budgetary deficits, and therefore most of them rely on donor support. As a result, governments are unable to finance educational facilities, provide teaching and learning resources, as well as employing teachers. Due to the weak nature of national economies in developing countries, most governments adopt cost-sharing strategy as way of reducing public expenditure on education, where parents meet part of the cost of education for their children (Sianesi & Reenen, 2003). This mode of financing education has instead overburdened parents from poor socio-economic backgrounds. Consequently, most of the children hailing from families in the low income bracket have been compelled to either dropout before reaching the terminal grade or repeat several grades before completing the basic education cycle. It is worthwhile to mention that the same parents have other obligations besides education.

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Mast of the people in developing nations belong to the poor masses. Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (2012) says that 45.9% of the population is poor, with a gini coefficient of 0.45. Out of these, 49.1% of them are in rural areas while 33.7% are in urban areas. According to Word Bank (2005), households are expected to finance 20% of primary, 60% of secondary and 8% of university education costs. Kenyans engage in different economic activities, but unemployment level is high at 12.7%. Among the few employed people, 20% of them are engaged in wage employment in the formal sector while 80% of the workforce is in the informal and non-wage employment sector. The situation is further complicated by the fact that unemployment rate for persons aged 28 – 45 years is 25%, which is higher than unemployment rate for workers below 27 years old, and above 46 years old (RoK, 2012). Since most parents lie within this age group, their ability to finance education for their children is low. Considering that parents at this age also concentrate on enhancing their economic security at their old age, their little income is not enough to meet all their financial obligations, particularly education.

In Kenya, poverty is also compounded by high dependency ratio. The working-age population is estimated at 19.8 million persons, upon who the 20.2 million unemployed people depend on (Guardian, 2011). Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs) are more affected since the economic activities carried out there are incapable of sustaining livelihoods (Mulongo, 2001). This is mainly because these regions are often affected by draught. While other areas tend to have stable incomes, their counterparts in ASAL regions are largely dependent on livestock. When pastures and diseases reduce, their livestock are wiped out, which dwindles their family earnings and hence their capacity to educate their children leading to low transition.

Despite the Ministry of Education guidelines on school fees in 2015, the cost of educating a child in secondary school in Kenya has gone so high with direct costs (school fees) ranging from K.Shs. 15, 000 in day schools to about K.Shs. 100, 000 per child per year in boarding schools (MoEST, 2015). Using these rates, it would cost an employed family over 60% of all their income on secondary education, 20% on primary education and 8% in university education (Sifuna, 2005). This does not include indirect costs of education. This means that while the government finances basic education through FPE and FSE, parents are required to meet other needs for their children, which are transport, uniforms, and students' personal needs (pocket money). Day scholars also need lunch while boarders pay for boarding charges. This has been cited as one of the reasons behind the decreasing enrolment of students in boarding schools (UNESCO, 2014).

The level of education of parents also determines the education for their children since parents also act as role models to their children. According to Temple (2001), many parents aim at educating their children to at least the level of education that they attained themselves. According to Corkum, McGonnell, and Schachar (2010), many pupils have high educational aspiration but their parents'

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low level of formal education provides them with poor role modeling and little encouragement to study. This affects girls more than boys and therefore low transition of girls from primary to secondary. According to Lelgitale (2000), low level of education among the parents in Samburu has also been blamed for betrothal of girls. Apart from the high value attached to bride wealth, the community has a negative attitude towards female education. These factors have in turn lowered transition rates from primary to secondary schools in the area. This is one of the factors that have sustained the gender gap in leadership, business and professional fields.

Parents form the basis upon which success of every person can be built on. It is the right of every child to receive parental care (RoK, 2010). Individual homesteads are made up of nuclear and at times extended families who shape the character, behaviour and perceptions of every child. It is from individual family's set up that a child grows up to be self-confident, hardworking and responsible, or to be angry and inadequate. Although formal learning starts at school, the actual education is offered to child at home, from the child's tender age (Nyongesa, 2007). When children do not receive their basic needs from their parents, they are likely to feel neglected. Children who are neglected are likely to seek help from their friends. Peer pressure is likely to expose them to exploitation through drug abuse, drugs trafficking and prostitution. As a result, they are likely to drop out of school losing their chances of transiting from primary to secondary level of education.

Child labour has also remained a big challenge to education in developing countries (Singh & Ozturk, 2000). As poverty rises, many families are forced to engage their children to work at home or get employed for earnings that will subsidize the family income. In many developing countries including Kenya, more children continue being engaged in domestic duties, farm and mine work, or do small scale business like hawking in urban areas. These part-time activities often lure children from school into full-time odd jobs like house help, farm workers, fishermen, mine workers and tour guides. Pupils who engage in these activities are often punished severally in school for absenteeism, loose interest in learning and finally perform poorly in examinations. Others may end up into crime and immorality, hence early marriages, prostitution and drug abuse. Child labour can therefore be a major contributor to low transition of pupils from primary to secondary schools. According to Ogolla (2013) children in Homabay begin fishing at Lake Victoria very early ages. Some of them are therefore not enrolled in school at all, or money gained from fishing lure some of those enrolled to drop out before completing primary school. This denies them a chance to transit to secondary schools.

Many families in Africa prefer boy child education as opposed to girl-child education (RoK, 2005). Child labour for girls is not only confined to families in low socio-economic status, but also to families with negative attitude towards education. In such families they prefer to engage

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children in their cultural sex-roles for instance boys look after cattle, as girls help their mothers to fetch firewood and water, and house work. In cases where parents have sons and daughters, some will prefer to engage girls at home as their brothers go to school. In Kenya, some of the communities in ASALs do not value education for girls, because they are meant to be married off at early ages (Matayos, 2010).

Education has the capacity to help alleviate the poverty through advancement of technology which leads to increased productivity. This influences the parents' attitude and commitment to educate their children. According to Juma (2010), family network and composition influences the attachment that a child will have towards education. Families that value economic activities with immediate returns like child labour than long life education are likely to encourage and engage them in out of school activities, and may not see the importance of taking their children to the next levels of schooling. Parents' economic activities also determine whether they have capacity to educate their children or not. In productive areas there are many economic activities, for instance agriculture, mining, commerce and formal employment, which enable more learners are able to transit from primary to secondary school levels (Obwagi, 2010). In fact in such areas, there is a proportionate growth in pupils' academic performance because their parents and guardians are able to pay school fees to retain them in school. Economic disparities lead to socio-economic inequalities because of unequal distribution of educational resources between regions.

According to Weya (2011), in countries with high unemployment rates among educated persons, there is a perception that education has low value. This may lead to apathy and anti-social behavior among learners, a situation that can make many learners opt out of school at lower levels of education to engage in activities that may appear more rewarding and assuring them of immediate economic gains. In an urban set up, young children may join street gangs and engage in socio-economic activities like touting and small-scale business at the expense of education.

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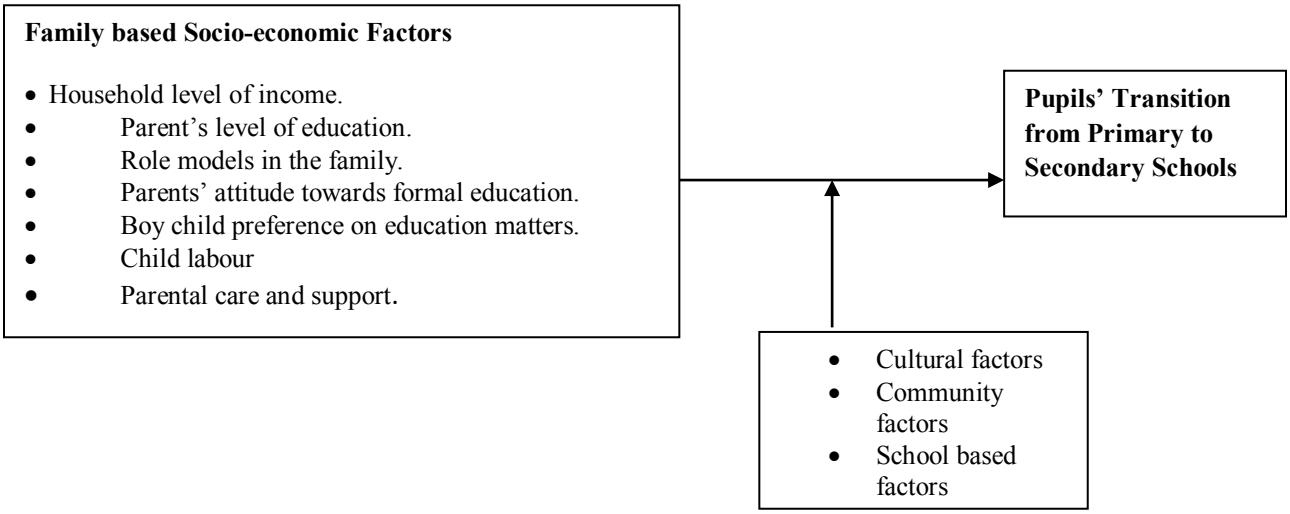

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted e*x-post facto* research design, a type of design that is applied in a situation whereby independent and dependent variables have already interacted. In this regard, the effect of interaction between socio-economic factors and transition was determined retrospectively (Kerlinger, 1986).

The study targeted a population of 1,064 respondents composed of 933 teachers and 131 chairpersons of Parents and Teachers Association from all the 131 public primary schools in the study area. The study was carried out on a sample of 411 respondents composed of 131 PTA chairpersons and 280 teachers. All the PTA chairpersons (n=131) in the 131 schools in the sub-county selected through stratified and simple random sampling techniques. This is equivalent to 30% of the total population. Data was collected using self-delivered questionnaires with seven items, each with five – point Likert scale on socio-economic factors that impact negatively on pupils' transition from primary to secondary schools in Kenya. Research instruments were piloted in five schools in the neighbouring Laikipia East Sub-County. The instrument was accepted after it achieved a cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of .79.

Nominal scale data was analyzed through frequency counts and percentages, while interval scale data was subjected to simple regression analysis so as to test the hypothesis at .05 alpha level. This was accomplished by use of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 21.0.

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study sought to investigate the extent to which selected family based socio-economic factors influence pupils' transition from primary to secondary schools in Laikipia West Sub-County in Kenya.

The selected indicators for family-based socio-economic factors that influence transition were;

i. Low level of household income.
ii. Low level of parent's education.
iii. Lack of educated role models in the family.
iv. Parents' negative attitude towards formal education.
v. Boy child preference on education matters.
vi. Child labour
vii. Lack od parental care and support.

To achieve this objective the following null hypothesis was formulated.

Family based socio-economic factors have no statistically significant influence on pupils' transition from primary to secondary schools in Laikipia West Sub-county, Kenya

The hypothesis presumed that family based socio-economic factors have no statistically significant influence on pupils' transition from primary to secondary schools. To ascertain the truth of this assumption, simple linear regression analysis was carried out. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of Simple Linear Regression Analysis between Family's Socio-economic Factors and Pupils Transition from Primary to Secondary Schools

Variable		r	r^2	Constant	df	F	p
Dependent	Pupils' transition	-0.852*	0.725	108.665	1,379	1000*	. 000
Independent	Family's socio-economic		beta (β)	Regression coefficient		t	

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factors				
	-0.852*	-0.028	-31.624	.000

Note: * means significant at .05 alpha level.

Table 9 shows that family based socio-economic factors had a negative linear correlation with transition of pupils from primary to secondary schools (β = -0.852; p = .000). The r^2 value of 0.725 further indicates that family based socio-economic factors accounted for 72.5% of the total variance in transition of pupils from primary to secondary schools. This implies that statistically, family based socio-economic factors and transition of pupils were not independent. The F- ratio was also found to be significant (F(1,379) = 1000; p = .000). This indicates that family based socio-economic factors had a significant negative influence on pupils' transition from primary to secondary schools. In this regard, the null hypothesis that family based socio-economic factors have no statistically significant influence on pupils' transition from primary to secondary schools was rejected at .05 level of significance. This led to the conclusion that if a family's socio-economic factors are minimized, the home environment would be more conducive to learning. As a result, children are likely to progress successfully through primary school and subsequently transit to secondary school and vice versa.

The findings that family' socio-economic factors significantly influence pupils' transition concurs with the findings by Frederickson *et al.* (2012) that household poverty limits parents' capacity to enroll children in secondary schools due to higher unit cost. Indeed, scholars (e.g. Kiumi and Chiuri, 2005; Griebel and Berwanger, 2006) have observed that pupils' transition to primary schools in many developing countries is hindered by child labour, parent's low level of formal education and gender preference in favour of boys. Apart from the factors identified in the study, Werunga Musera, and Sindabi (2011), identified parent's occupation and the occupational aspirations of an individual learner as other socio-economic factors influencing transition.

The study concluded that parent's low levels of income, parents' low level of formal education, parents' low value for formal education, preference for the boy child education, lack of educated role models, child labour, and marital instability influence transition of pupils from primary to secondary schools.

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The study also recommended that the government should encourage and support income generating activities in the rural areas in order for parents to earn enough money to educate their children. Once educated, people become positive role models.

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