

## **INFLUENCE OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT ON TRANSITION RATES AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN MACHAKOS COUNTY**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of the study was to establish the influence of parental involvement on transition rates among primary schools in Machakos County. This study used the New Public Governance theory. The study utilized a descriptive survey research design. The study was conducted in Machakos County. The study targeted the 707 public primary school in Machakos County. The target population were 707 head teachers and 10908 teachers from Machakos County. A sample size comprising 71 schools was selected. A sample of 5 heads and 371 teachers was selected. To gather data for the study, primary sources such as questionnaires and interview guides were utilized. A pilot was conducted to assess the clarity of questions and accuracy of tools. The study used content validity. Content validity was determined via subject matter expert's verdicts. Reliability coefficient of the research instrument was assessed using Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ). To be considered reliable, the items should have Cronbach's alpha of 0.7 or above. For the study, a combination of quantitative and qualitative data was collected, which underwent analysis using Version 27 of SPSS. Descriptive statistics like frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviation applied on quantitative data enable easy

interpretation & presentation in tables or graphs format as results outputted. The study found that parental involvement in their children's school life through attendance of meetings, virtual communication through audio and video and physical visitations are beneficial for the junior school students and that peer counseling and guidance and counseling programs are key in promoting class attendance and completion rates. The study concluded that parental engagement, through attending meetings, virtual communication, and physical visitations, plays a crucial role in enhancing student success. The study recommended that schools should prioritize organizing regular meetings to ensure continuous communication between parents and teachers. This could help in keeping parents updated on their children's academic progress, behavior, and challenges.

**Keywords:** Administrative Strategies, Parental Involvement, Disciplinary Practices, Dropout Tracing, Transition Rate, Mentorship Programs, Re-Entry Support Practices.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Education is one of the ways through which society hands down knowledge, expertise, and values from generation to generation. The type of education received over one's lifetime changes their mind, character, and physical abilities (Mathias, 2015). Therefore, educational empowerment will fight ignorance and promote knowledge acquisition enabling individuals to become better citizens. For this to be realized, students' wellbeing should be maintained as they transition from primary to secondary school (Mwikya, 2019). There are many changeovers in education including changing from pre-primary school to primary and from primary to secondary, and the low transition rates from lower to higher cadres of education is a major concern in many nations globally. As nations prioritize the achievement of universal post-primary Education for All (EFA) objectives, there is a discrepancy between primary school enrollment and transition to secondary education. Nevertheless, rates of transitioning from primary to secondary schools differ among countries. Opting for higher studies fosters economic growth and social cohesion by promoting trust and tolerance amongst individuals. Secondary schooling holds significant importance as it enhances one's standard living and opens doors for career opportunities that decide their future prospects while escaping poverty. Several efforts have been initiated in order to mitigate insufficient transition rates from primary-to-secondary levels worldwide. A recent report published by World Bank highlights certain institution-based factors impacting this issue varying across different countries or regions therein influentially contributing towards better performance outcomes within the entire system at large.

Globally, an average of 85% of children attend secondary school after completing their last grade in primary school, though low-income countries have much lower transition rates compared to the developed ones. In the U.S the primary completion rates stood at 98.83% in 2017, though the high rates of student dropouts were among the low-income, and minority ethnicities (National Centre for Education Statistics (NCES) 2019), which is an indication of existing disparity in transition rates within the same country. In England, Evangelous, Taggart, Sylva, Melhuish, Sammons and Siraj-Blatchford (2018) found that several factors contribute to poor transition of learners to secondary schools. However, their study revealed that engaging the community leaders, both religious and civic helped in tracing the drop-outs, identifying what contributed to high drop-out rates and also facilitated re-entry of the drop-outs out of schools. Furthermore, Besi and Sakellariou (2019) found that follow-up strategies are critical in promoting transition of learners to secondary schools in Greece. They affirm that transition is critical for the overall success of the learner's academic endeavors. To be successful, they found that follow-up programs that utilized mobile technologies, to trace the drop-outs and re-enroll them by providing effective support through guidance, counselling and disciplinary practices were effective in increasing the transition rates.

In Latin America, specifically in Brazil, the youth are twice more likely to be out of primary schools due to poverty, early pregnancies, criminal activities, and drug abuse which threatens the country's economic growth and poverty reduction. To address this problem, the government developed the Education Reform Program in 2017 to promote regional and

socio-economic equity and provide technical support for the schools. The country also launched the 'active school search strategy' using modern technology like mobile applications to enable local authorities and field workers to re-enroll children and adolescents. This strategy has greatly improved re-entry of school drop-outs, hence enhancing transition rate. In Asia specifically in New Zealand, the high transition rates have been attributed to the schools and community leadership approaches where the teachers, religious leaders and parents offer guidance and counselling to learners (Mwikya, 2019). The leaders also promote a culture that welcomes and supports students who dropped out due lack of resources, early pregnancies, abuse of drugs or bullying-related causes. The teachers and parents work together to create a flexible and innovative response that helps monitor, support guide the learners to prevent drop-outs and retain reentrants. With reduced drop-outs and support for re-entrants, the country has successfully enhanced transition rates. In Africa, particularly in Eastern and Southern Africa, the average transition rate is below the global average at 67.1% and 52.4% in Central and Western Africa (Mwikya, 2019). In some sub-Saharan countries, transition rates are above 80% despite the majority of the countries being signatory to the Education for All, Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Dakar Framework for Action in 2000. This saw eight goals being developed in the already belated MDGs, with goals 2 and 3 geared towards providing free and compulsory education for all. However, only a third of the 164 countries achieved the set education goals in 2015 (Mathias, 2015). Due to the scarcity of schools, only a quarter of Senegal's primary level graduates are able to enroll in secondary education. The distribution of available schools is uneven, resulting in limited access for most students (World Bank, 2018). In Eritrea, low transition rates occur because many pupils repeat their final year due to poor academic performance. African nations generally allocate just 15-20% of state funds towards secondary education which often goes neglected; success is crucial for advancing from primary school worldwide (UNESCO 2014).

The education sector in Kenya has been a significant focus for investment by the Kenyan Government, as seen in other developing countries. Over time, various Commissions, Committees and Taskforces have addressed challenges faced within this field. One such Commission was established after independence to tackle reform of the inherited colonial system with an aim to better address national needs; it delivered what is known today as The Ominde Report (1964). This report suggested restructuring of educational systems towards fostering unity and building human capital for progress toward development goals - Sessional Paper No: 10 of 1965 formally adopted its recommendations under African Socialism Application incorporating them into future planning agendas post-independence. In the past twelve years, Kenya has achieved notable progress regarding education. The abolishment of primary school fees by the government led to a significant increase in net enrollment ratio from 62% in 1999 to an impressive rate of 83% by 2009. At least 32% of learners who enrolled in primary school in 2009 did not sit for Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) in 2017 which shows that some of the learners who begun their studies fail to successfully complete their primary education (KNBS, 2018). This means, at least 3 out of 10 learners who enrolled in primary school either dropped out of school or repeated

classes, which signifies poor transition rate. This is despite education being a key factor under the social pillar of Kenya's Vision 2030 due to its ability to improve the earning potential of Kenyans and enable the citizens to lift themselves out of poverty (Mwikya, 2019).

The quest to reverse this situation and attain quality education for all in Kenya led to the development of the 100% transition policy, which envisions that all learners who enroll in primary education are expected to complete and join secondary school. In the National Education Sector Plan (NESP), a policy has been put into place to attain specific goals, which include providing free and mandatory superior primary education till 18 years of age; creating an environment that is conducive for learners in school; ensuring efficient performance management and sector governance at all levels; fostering robust collaborative partnerships among stakeholders like national bodies, counties, institutions as well as communities. These are some of the objectives laid down by The Ministry of Education in its latest statement issued in 2018.

This study will focus on parental involvement on transition rates, school learner's mentorship programs on transition rates, disciplinary practices for delinquents on transition rates and drop tracing on transition rates. The parents support children in their learning as they transit from primary school to secondary schools. The parents help to ensure that their children have access to education; and invests in resources and activities that support and promote transition (Honeycutt & Livermore, 2018). It is crucial for parents to prepare children as much as possible for what is to be expected in the new setting; educate and prepare children ahead of time for any new situation or transition. Children can practice certain routines as they will do them when they enter their new grade (Papadakis, Zaranis & Kalogiannakis, 2019). Mentorship worldwide is embraced as a key component of an individual's holistic development. It is practiced at different levels which include family, community, school and work place. Mentorship program is critical in nurturing positive values, attitude and skills to help learners make informed choices with regard to transitioning to secondary schools. The implementation of mentorship program in various schools will enhance the acquisition of relevant positive values and life skills by learners. This will go a long way in promoting the realization of the national goals of Education. It will also lead to positive discipline and enable individuals to grow into well-adjusted citizens.

Schools should be spaces where students feel safe and welcome, actively engage with learning, and strive for success. Discipline policies and practices should reinforce these values, particularly safety and belonging (Christle & Jolivette, 2018). Unfortunately, ineffective discipline practices that punish students harshly and take them away from the classroom like suspensions, alternative school placements, corporal punishment, referrals to law enforcement, and expulsions are prevalent in many schools in Kenya (Njenga, 2019). These practices are incredibly harmful to students which might affect the transition rates to secondary schools. Students can fall behind academically, face social and emotional consequences, disengage from school, and lose trust in the adults tasked with educating and protecting them. Furthermore, traditionally underserved students are more likely to face harsh punishments and the resulting negative consequences (Maxime, 2018). Low

achievers show weak commitment to education. The maladjusted dropouts are characterized as showing high level of school misbehavior and they constitute highest level of dropout (Rimbere, 2019). The slow learners are most likely to drop out of school than average and above average learners because they are less motivated in learning and they cannot engage well with either the teachers or other learners who are either average or above average. The fact that they feel neglected in class increases their chances of leaving school because of negative attitude before the full cycle of primary education (Chelimo, 2018).

In Machakos County, increased cases of delinquency associated with sexual activities have led to increased cases of teenage pregnancy (Kenya Health Information Systems, 2020), which implies that some learners will either drop out of school or will repeat classes. How the school administration handles such cases in terms of mentorship, involvement of parents, drop-out tracing and support for re-entrants may tilt the academic transition curve to the positive or negative. According to Mac Iver, Epstein, Sheldon and Fonseca (2015), for the success of any academic transition policy, institutional administrators are expected to come up with programs that allow the parents to interact with the school to better the academic progression and performance of their children. The school administration can sponsor activities such as academic, sports days and mentorship programs where parents get invited to school to encourage learners to attend school and perform better in their studies. The administration can also implore the mechanisms to trace school dropouts and support the reentrants in a move to ensure all learners who join primary schools complete and eventually joins secondary school. Depending on how these programs are executed, Akos, Lineberry and Queen (2015) opines that they can tremendously address the problem associated with academic transitions. However, it is not clear whether these programs are available in schools across Machakos; hence this study will investigate to determine whether these programs are locally available.

Several studies have been conducted on transition from primary to secondary school. Schnautz (2017) found that the parental involvements as well as the effectiveness of mentorship programs focusing on guidance and counseling and support for the students who reenter the schools can effectively address the challenge of poor learner completion and transition rates. Parental involvement was found to include effective and open communication with teachers and actively participating in their children's academic and co-curricular lives by partaking in academic days and inn field days. Regarding mentorship programs, it was found by Judd (2017) that effective mentorship programs that support the learners in dealing with issues of bullying, drug abuse and peer pressure can help prevent dropout rates while also increasing the probability of reentry and successful completion among adolescents. Therefore, this study will investigate whether there are mentorship programs for school drop-outs and it effectiveness in promoting successful completion of primary education.

Similarly, Christle and Jolivette (2018) report that the focus of the policies of discipline practices should be on activities and approaches that promote learner's growth academically, behavioral change and academic achievement. This entails counselling and guidance programs and face-to-face talks with experts to help in addressing the disciplinary incidences like bullying, vandalisms, drug abuse and premature engagement in sex resulting

in pregnancy. Kavula (2016) reported that expulsion, physical beating, and subjecting students to physical labor are ineffective strategies in dealing with pregnancies, drug abuse or other cases of indiscipline. Rather, alternative practices including class talks with peers and experts as well as parental involvement and mentoring programs have been found to be more effective approaches.

While the country gears towards 100% transition rate from primary to secondary school, a report by UNESCO (2015) show that only 84% has been realized, which is far below the universal transition envisioned through the already elapsed SGDs and is also below the global average of 85%. Even then, few counties including Machakos County (92%) have been pulling the country down, which means if the transition rate in such counties is raised, then the national average will rise (Gongo, 2019). The trends in transition rates nationally and Machakos County from 2019 – 2022 are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. Transition Rates Nationally and Machakos County**

<b>Year</b>	<b>National transition Rates</b>	<b>Transition rates in Machakos County</b>
2019	100%	75.2%
2020	100%	76.6%
2021	100%	78.1%
2022	100%	79.4%

Data on table 1 shows that transition rates from primary to secondary schools in Machakos County has remained between 20-25% below the national transition rates. This shows that there are factors inhibiting transition from primary to secondary. The transition rate is expected to be in tandem with that of the national transition rate. The enrolment data from most of the sub-counties in Machakos County schools show under enrolment (Ministry of Education, 2023). These realities call for a school administration that implements effective strategies that can address their plight and ensure their academic transition is not affected. It is within this background that the proposed study purposes to investigate the influence of primary school administrative strategies in achievement of 100% transition rate from primary to secondary school in Machakos County.

### **Problem Statement**

According to UNESCO (2008) data, children residing in sub-Saharan Africa have the lowest chances of enrolling into secondary schools at their designated age. To ensure universal access for basic education, Kenya has implemented various measures such as Free Primary Education since 2003 and later introduced Free Day Secondary Education initiative from 2008 onwards. Despite expecting a transition rate target of 75% with this approach, Machakos County's primary-to-secondary school transition rates remain below desirable level of the 100% transition rate advocated by the ministry of education. The national average transition rate stands at a full-blown commendable figure touching the ideal count

of rounding-up all students towards higher-level systems within Kenyan academia while remaining unachieved by mere county-scale implementations alone. In Machakos Sub-County there is under enrollment in most of the secondary schools (Machakos Sub-County Education Office). This implies that facilities continue to remain idle due to lack of students. The transition rate from primary to secondary school in Machakos County is between 75-79% implying that between 20-25% of pupils do not transit to secondary school (Machakos County Director, 2023). This implies that there are critical factors that contribute to the problem of low transition rate in Machakos County. Hence the need for this study.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Durisic and Bunijevac (2017) set out to analyze the positive effects of parental participation and involvement in school activities on the successful completion of education. The study employed a descriptive survey design and was carried out in Sweden, where 56 parents were randomly sampled to participate. Data collection instruments included both interviews and questionnaires, enabling the researchers to generate qualitative and quantitative data, which were analyzed using SPSS and NVIVO software. The findings revealed that the successful completion of education heavily depended on parents' active engagement in school activities, particularly their attendance at school meetings and academic days. Furthermore, the study demonstrated the value of information exchange between parents and teachers, whereby teachers gained insights into the children's educational histories, enabling them to better support learners. The study also highlighted that annual parent-teacher conferences, phone calls, newsletters, and consistent communication strategies were effective tools in promoting student completion and transition rates. These results aligned with those of Lee and Bowen (2016), who also established that parental involvement fosters improved academic outcomes, greater satisfaction among teachers and parents, and a more favorable school climate. However, a major limitation of this study was its location in Sweden, a country with a unique social, economic, and cultural environment, significantly different from sub-Saharan Africa and Kenya. Consequently, its findings may not be directly generalizable to the Kenyan context. This limitation provides a gap that the current study seeks to fill by conducting a localized investigation in Kenya.

In a related study, Duan, Guan, and Bu (2019) explored parental involvement and its impact on student performance and discipline in Chinese junior schools. The large-scale study targeted 19,487 schools in Wuhan and used a combination of educational surveys and interviews with both parents and teachers. Their findings revealed that parental involvement—expressed through attendance of meetings, use of virtual communication technologies such as audio and video calls, and physical school visitations played a crucial role in fostering positive student outcomes. In particular, students benefited academically and behaviorally when parents actively engaged in their school lives. These results corroborate the earlier findings of Benner, Boyle, and Sadler (2016), who emphasized that parental involvement during adolescence is fundamental for educational success. While Duan et al.'s (2019) study largely focused on academic achievement and discipline, the current study aims to address a slightly different dimension: successful completion and

transition rates of students. Therefore, the present research fills an important gap by shifting the emphasis from general performance to transition outcomes in the Kenyan context, specifically within Machakos County.

Similarly, Falbo, Lein, and Amador (2017) examined parental involvement in South Africa, focusing on its role in the effective transition of students from primary to secondary education and on how parents influence the formation of positive peer networks for their children. Using a descriptive survey design, the researchers interviewed 26 students and their parents. The results showed that parents played an active role in supporting both the academic and social lives of their children. They monitored academic progress, assisted with homework, and encouraged constructive peer relationships. Moreover, the study found that parents also took part in school events, thereby modeling positive engagement for their children. Although the findings provided useful insights into the multidimensional role of parents, the study's small sample size and its confinement to a South African setting limited the generalizability of the results to broader populations, including Kenyan schools.

In the Kenyan context, Mudibo (2016) investigated the extent of parental involvement in secondary school education in Magarini Sub-County. Using a descriptive research design, the study sampled 85 students from three schools and collected data through questionnaires, which were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics in SPSS. The results indicated low levels of parental involvement, as many parents failed to attend academic days, rarely visited schools physically, and did not consistently communicate with teachers regarding their children's academic progress. These findings stand in contrast with international studies, such as those by Durisic and Bunijevac (2017) and Duan et al. (2019), which emphasize the significance of parental participation in enhancing student outcomes. Mudibo's findings were, however, in agreement with Benner, Boyle, and Sadler (2016), who maintained that parental involvement in adolescents' education is critical for success. Nevertheless, while Mudibo's study examined the effect of parental involvement on academic achievement, the current research focuses more specifically on how such involvement influences the 100% transition policy in Kenyan secondary schools. This distinction underscores the need for a contextualized investigation to generate evidence relevant to the Kenyan education system.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study used the New Public Governance theory which focuses on the collaboration between the public and the private sector, coordination of the stakeholder's participation, result-oriented approaches, better service delivery and accountability standards (Osbourne, 2010). The NPG theory also suggests that inter-organization relationship can enhance effectiveness of service provision (Osbourne, 2010). NPG developed from the New Public Management theory developed by Thatcher (1995) and Mintzberg (1996). In his 1998 work, Stoker outlines five key elements of governance theory. The initial component pertains to the institutions and players that fill administrative roles within governance systems. Another aspect is the acknowledgement of indistinct boundaries and accountabilities when

addressing social and economic dilemmas. A third proposition highlights power dependence in relation to collective action's diverse stakeholders. Lastly, the theorist proposes that governance is the capacity to get things not, not necessarily using command, power, or authority, but through collaborative measures.

Moreover, as Kooiman (1999) asserts socio-political governance focuses on the overarching institutional interrelationships in the society and how these interrelations can help in creating and implementing policies. This will help in understanding how the community can come together to overcome the challenge of poor learner transition. The other aspect of NPG is public policy governance which refers to how policy elites and networks come together to create and govern the policy process. This aspect will be used to determine how social networks can be utilized in tracking the learner drop outs and the effectiveness of the re-entry policies on learner transition.

The theory was significant to the current study in that it helped the researcher examine how mobilization of public organizations through the effective utilization of institutional and external environmental resources can help implement changes to facilitate the achievement of strategic goals and objectives. The theory was also used to examine how the 100% transition public policy implementation can be used to diagnose public issues, elicit the necessary discussion and arguments. The NPG theory helped understand the challenges that learners go through and will assist in developing appropriate mentorship programs. The theory was also critical in understanding the complexity of the student's discipline and how collaboration between different stakeholders can help instill discipline to promote successful completion of primary school.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

The study utilized a descriptive research design. Descriptive analysis involves presenting information and features of a particular population. This methodology offered an opportunity for in-depth theoretical scrutiny to be conducted on the subject matter under investigation. By adopting this design, data was logically arranged and all aspects accounted for during the course of inquiry before being integrated into one comprehensive body that encapsulates key themes developed throughout its entire scope. This design was important for this study problem because it provides a detailed and accurate picture of the characteristics and behaviors of a particular population or subject. Hence it was able to describe clearly the influence of school administrative strategies on transition to secondary schools in public primary schools, Machakos County Kenya.

### **Target Population**

The study targeted the 707 public primary school in Machakos County. The target population was 707 head teachers and 10908 teachers from Machakos County. The study covered all the primary schools in the county at large because the target group is needed to

come up with generalizable results (Bryman, 2016). The study population was as shown in table below.

**Table 2. Target Population**

Target Population	Number
Public primary Schools	707
Head teachers	707
Teachers	10,908

*Source: Machakos County Education Office (2024)*

### Sampling Technique and Sample Size

Out of the 707 public primary schools targeted, a sample size comprising 71 schools were selected. This selection represented 10% of the total target population. The justification for this sample size was based on Mugenda and Mugenda's (2003) assertion that a descriptive study requires a sample size of between 10% and 30%. The schools were divided into strata (extra county schools, county schools and sub county schools), from which the researcher choose one head teacher for each stratum using purposive sampling making a total of 71 head teachers. The sample size for the teachers was determined through the Fisher's et al. (1998) method. The formula is (sample size  $n = \frac{z^2 pq}{d^2}$ ) and it is described below.

$n$  = (desired number of individuals/objects in the study)

$z$  = gives the standard deviation (1.96)

$p$  = is the target population which has the desired characteristics being studied at 0.5

is the required sample size.

$q = 1 - p = 1 - 0.5 = 0.5$

$d$  = gives the degree of accuracy at 95% CI (0.05)

The formula was thus,

$$\frac{1.96^2 \times 0.5 \times 0.5}{0.05^2} = 384$$

The study population in the sub county is more than 10,000. The research thus, applied the finite correction factor formula given by  $nf = \frac{n}{1 + n/N}$

Therefore,  $nf = \frac{384}{1 + (384/10908)} = 371$  participants.

**Table 3. Sample Size**

Target population	Number	Sampling technique	Sample ration	Sample size
Public primary Schools	707	Stratified	0.1	5
Head teachers	707	Purposive	0.1	5
Teachers	10908	Simple random sampling	0.03	371

*Source: Machakos County Education Office (2024).*

### **Research Instruments**

To gather data for the study, primary sources such as questionnaires and interview guides were utilized. The teachers sampled in the study were issued with questionnaires prepared in advance. The questionnaires were structured where the respondents were given questions and asked to pick their responses from the given choices. Questionnaires provided numerical data for quantitative analysis and helped in testing the association and strength of associations between the study variables. The questionnaires were divided into various sections. The first section solicited the demographic and general characteristics of the respondents while the other sections collected data guided by the study objectives. The questionnaires were important in that they allowed for the collection of consistent and standardized data across different respondents. This consistency helped to compare and analyze responses more easily. Since the same set of questions were asked to all participants, their responses were compared more easily, leading to more reliable insights and conclusions.

Interview schedules are critical in garnering more in-depth understanding of the experiences of the study participants based on their individual meaning of the phenomenon under study. The interview schedule targeted the head teachers to solicit more information on the different administrative strategies adopted by the schools to enhance student's transition rates. The interview schedules were utilized to gather the information that supplemented the quantitative information obtained using a questionnaire. The justification for the use of questions was that they allowed for the collection of rich, detailed, and nuanced information. The interviews gave the respondents the opportunity to elaborate on their answers, explain their thoughts, and offer context. This made it easier to capture complex emotions, experiences, and perceptions.

### **Data Collection Procedure**

The data collection procedure was done in the following phases based on the process described:

The researcher began by obtaining an introduction letter from Kenyatta University, which served as an official document for the researcher to present to the relevant authorities. This letter was crucial for gaining formal permission to proceed with the research and allowed the researcher to officially approach the National Council for Science Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) for a research permit. After securing the introduction letter, the researcher applied for a research permit from the National Council for Science Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). This step was necessary to ensure that the research adhered to national standards and guidelines for conducting ethical and approved research.

Once the research permit was in place, the researcher followed a customary protocol by visiting the Machakos County Director of Education. During this meeting, the researcher explained the research objectives and the purpose of the study. This was essential for building rapport and ensuring that the local education authority was informed and supportive

of the research activities. It also helped to align the researcher's plans with the county's educational priorities.

Before approaching the primary schools, the researcher engaged in pre-planning. This involved preparing a detailed schedule to contact head teachers and other sampled teachers at the schools. Pre-planning was crucial because it ensured that appointments were made in advance, which helped to respect the teachers time and ensured smooth coordination with the schools.

### **Data Analysis**

For the study, a combination of quantitative and qualitative data was collected, which underwent analysis using Version 27 of SPSS. The raw information from both types of data sources was interpreted by implementing distinct analytical procedures. Descriptive statistics like frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviation applied on quantitative data enabled easy interpretation & presentation in tables or graphs format as results outputted. In contrast, content analysis strategy was used to interpret qualitative data gathered during this study. This technique involved relating messages and information to trends by accurately and analytically identifying certain elements of each. In addition, the qualitative data was presented using themes in relation to the study objectives.

## **RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **Parental Involvement on Transition Rates**

#### **Extent of Agreement on Parental Involvement on Transition Rates**

The respondents were requested to indicate the extent to which they agreed with statements on parental involvement on transition rates. The findings are as shown in table 3.

**Table 4. Extent of Agreement on Parental Involvement on Transition Rates**

<b>Statement</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev</b>
In school, children are provided with writing materials such as books and pens (including color) by their parents	321	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	135 (42.1%)	186 (57.9)	4.179	0.670
The involvement of parents is a valuable chance for schools to enhance their programs, resulting in improved academic achievement among students	321	0 (0%)	16 (5.2%)	51 (15.8%)	169 (52.6%)	84 (26.3%)	3.607	1.031
Parental involvement in their children's school life through attendance of meetings, virtual communication through audio and video and physical visitations are beneficial for the junior school students	321	17 (5.3%)	17 (5.3%)	33 (10.5%)	135 (42.1%)	118 (36.8%)	4.500	0.509
The children were assisted by their parents who supervised both their academic and social lives which helped improve the children academic performance	321	0 (0%)	17 (5.3%)	51 (15.8%)	135 (42.1%)	118 (36.8%)	3.714	0.854
Parental involvement in their children's academic life through physical visitations and academic days help improve children's academic history	321	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	68 (21.1%)	101 (31.6%)	152 (47.3%)	4.036	0.744
<b>Composite mean</b>							<b>4.007</b>	<b>0.762</b>

From the findings the composite mean was 4.007 while composite standard deviation was 0.762. This depicts that parental involvement in their children's school life through attendance of meetings, virtual communication through audio and video and physical visitations are beneficial for the junior school students (mean=4.5, SD=0.509). With a composite mean of 4.007, the data suggests that, on average, parental involvement is perceived to have a positive impact. The composite standard deviation of 0.762 shows that there is some variability in how different individuals or groups view this involvement, but the value is not too high, meaning the perceptions are generally clustered around the mean. The findings agree with a study by Epstein, (2021) who highlights that when parents are involved in school activities, whether through attendance at meetings or regular communication, it improves students' academic achievement and emotional well-being. She

emphasizes how schools can build partnerships with families to create environments that support students' learning. The research synthesis by Henderson and Mapp (2022) found that students whose parents are actively involved in their education are more likely to attend school regularly, have better grades, and perform better on standardized tests. Their involvement also fosters better behavior and social development.

Qualitative data from the KIIs supplemented the findings as they indicated that parental involvement is a crucial strategy for the successful completion of primary education because it creates a strong support system for students and enhances their overall learning experience.

One key informant stated that,

*“When parents actively engage in their child's education, children tend to perform better academically. This involvement can range from helping with homework, attending parent-teacher conferences, or simply showing interest in the child's schoolwork. The support helps build a positive attitude toward learning. Children are more motivated to succeed in school when they feel that their parents are invested in their education. This encouragement boosts their self-esteem and interest in school activities, creating a cycle of positive reinforcement. Parental involvement has been linked to improved behavior in school.”*

Another KII indicated that,

*“Children whose parents are engaged tend to exhibit fewer behavioral problems and have better social interactions with peers and teachers. This contributes to a more conducive learning environment. Regular communication between parents and teachers helps both parties understand the child's strengths, weaknesses, and overall progress. This connection allows teachers to tailor their approaches to the child's needs, and parents can provide additional support at home.”*

### Correlation Analysis

The research question was: what was the relationship between school administrative strategies and transition to secondary schools in public primary schools, Machakos County Kenya. To achieve this the researcher applied Pearson moment correlation on the study variable's association. The findings are shown in table 4.

Table 5. Correlations

		Transition	Parental involvement
<b>Transition</b>	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.612
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.	.002
	N	321	321
<b>Parental involvement</b>	Correlation Coefficient	.612	1.000
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.002	.
	N	321	321

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The study sought to establish the relationship between parental involvement and students' transition. The findings revealed a positive and statistically significant correlation between the two variables. The correlation coefficient was  $r = 0.612$ , with a significance level of  $p = 0.002$  ( $N = 321$ ). This indicates that higher levels of parental involvement are associated with smoother and more successful student transitions. Given that the correlation is moderately strong and significant, the results suggest that parental support plays a crucial role in enhancing students' ability to adapt and progress during the transition period.

### **Conclusion**

The study concluded that parental involvement in their children's school life through attendance of meetings, virtual communication through audio and video and physical visitations are beneficial for the junior school students and that peer counselling and guidance and counselling programs are key in promoting class attendance and completion rates. The study concluded that the responsibility of enhancing discipline and transition is carried out by a trained guidance and counselling teacher and that peer counselling improves the rapport among learners leading to better discipline and a smoother transition and that tracing of dropouts and supporting them through mentorship programs is critical for effectively addressing challenges in student transition.

### **Recommendations of the Study**

From the results of the study, the following recommendations were made; the schools should prioritize organizing regular meetings (both in-person and virtual) to ensure continuous communication between parents and teachers. This could help in keeping parents updated on their children's academic progress, behavior, and challenges. Schools should expand peer counseling programs where older students' mentor younger ones. Training peer counselors in conflict resolution, academic support, and emotional guidance could be integral in fostering a positive school environment. The school administration should ensure that there is a sufficient number of trained guidance counselors to cater to students' needs, especially during crucial transition periods (e.g., from primary to junior school or junior school to high school).

The schools should implement systems to track students who are at risk of dropping out due to absenteeism, academic struggles, or emotional distress. Schools should provide targeted interventions, such as personalized tutoring, mentoring, or even home visits to engage these students and help them stay on track. Schools should develop and implement a robust system for monitoring and evaluating the transition programs to measure their effectiveness and identify areas for improvement. The Ministry of Education, in partnership with the county education offices, should conduct periodic evaluations of transition programs, focusing on student performance, dropout rates, and the effectiveness of administrative strategies.

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