



NJHS

Nairobi Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences

ISSN 2520-4009 (Print) Online Journal homepage: <http://www.theroyallitejournal.com>

INFLUENCE OF TEACHERS ON ADJUSTMENT OF FORM ONE STUDENTS TO SECONDARY SCHOOL IN UASIN GISHU COUNTY, KENYA.

SARAH BUNDOTICH

Department of Educational Psychology,
University of Eldoret, Kenya.

Abstract

Research evidence indicates that the transition from primary to secondary school is an educational milestone in the lives of all children (Sirsch, 2003). This implies that a proper adjustment to secondary school for form one students is necessary because it leads to learners' school retention. Transition from primary to secondary school involves a movement from a small school to a more heterogeneous school with increased expectation on academic performance and less teachers' attention. As a result of reduced attention from teachers, a fall in academic performance and rising anxiety may emerge (Frey, Ruchkin, Martin & Schwab-Stone, 2009). Therefore, learners' school retention and academic motivation were linked to teacher support (Frey et al, 2009). The objective of the study was to determine the influence of teachers on adjustment form one students to secondary school. Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory (1979) was employed since it asserts that behaviour is as a result of personal attributes and the environment contributions. The study employed explanatory survey research design. The target population was 414 school administrators and 14,043 form one students in Uasin Gishu County. Multiple sampling techniques were used to select the schools and participants. The sample size was 200 administrators and 389 form one students. The study used both quantitative and qualitative data hence sets of questionnaire and focus group discussion were used in data collection. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse data. The findings were ($\beta_2 = -.008$, $q < 0.05$) and $r = 0.496$, $q < 0.01$ respectively. Qualitative data was analysed based on emerging themes. The results indicate no significant influence of teachers on adjustment of form one students to secondary school. The study concluded that focus on high mean score for the school and personal aspects of students hinders teachers from helping form one students adjust to secondary school.

Key words: Transition, Adjustment, teacher support and retention.



Print ISSN 2520-4009

© Nairobi Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences

Volume 1, Issue 3, May 2017

1.0 Introduction

Transition from primary to secondary school involves a movement from a small classroom and school set up to a large with more support from teachers to a more heterogeneous class and school with increased expectation of independent academic performance and less teachers' support. As a result of diminishing attention from teachers, a fall in academic performance and rising anxiety may arise (Frey, Ruchkin, Martin & Schwab-Stone, 2009; Marsten, 2008). Much as the Kenyan government has demonstrated a lot of effort in providing basic education to its citizens, but this crucial moment of adjustment to secondary school has not been given much consideration yet it determines school retention through acquired social well-being and academic success of the student while in secondary school as well as life after school. Studies suggest that teachers' support to students on adjustment to secondary school is a crucial element for quality learning environments. Students who feel supported by teachers are found to have a positive motivational orientation to school work and they experience positive social and emotional wellbeing' (Bru, Stornes, Munthe & Thuen, 2010). However, perceived diminishing teachers support may translate to a drop academic performance and sense loneliness. This is because when positive adjustment is not achieved, students may develop lack of interest in school, lack or little class engagement, absenteeism from school may crop in and eventual dropping out may follow (Akos, 2006). This will imply lack of personal economic improvement and slow economic development for the country as well. This is because young people are strong and failure to tap on their productivity impact negatively on economic development of any given country. All these listed consequences come as a result of lack of knowledge concerning adjustment among educationists and stake holders in the education sector in Kenya. In the event that such crucial knowledge is lacking, education suffers from drawbacks yet in itself, it is considered as a key factor for any nation to realize its economic growth and development.

1.1 Purpose of the Study

The aim of this study was to examine the influence of teachers on adjustment of form one students to secondary school in Uasin Gishu County.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

School transition from primary to secondary implies academic, social and environmental change (Frey et al., 2009) hence when form one students perceive emotional and social support from their teachers this will lead to school retention, interest in school activities, academic success as well as general well-being of the form one students. However, when no support from teachers is perceived, students may develop lack of interest in school, lack or little class engagement, absenteeism from school may crop in and eventual dropping out may follow (Akos, 2006). This implies that school positive school climate has link on social adjustment which comes from teachers.

In Kenya Subsidized Secondary Education by government has seen a high entry rate of students to secondary schools. However, a huge variation on entry and completion rates has been documented like out of 1.18 million who joined form one in 2007 only 356, 015 sat KCSE in 2010 which is 30% (Dube, 2011). This means increased primary to secondary school transition has been seen take care off of Free Secondary Education (FSE) funding policy by the Kenyan government (Dube, 2011)but not much has been put in place to address form one student adjustment to secondary schools.

Previous Kenyan studies have only focused on factors hindering transition from primary to secondary school, relationship among school Adjustment, Gender and Academic Achievement amongst Secondary School Students and influence of parent- adolescent communication on psychological adjustment of secondary school students (Winga, Agak & Ayere, 2011; Disiye, 2012; Kiuru, Nurmi, Aunola, Salmela – Aro,

2009) respectively. These studies are related to this study, but they have not directly addressed the influence of teachers on adjustment of form one students to secondary school. Yet, poor school adjustment leading to school dropout poses a serious problem since early school dropout jeopardizes future career, employment opportunities and life chances for such students [3, 4]. This study, therefore, sought to establish the influence of teachers on adjustment of form one students to secondary school.

1.3 Literature Review

Students' ability to cope with and adjust to secondary school is dependent on several factors, including personal maturity and coping resources available, the nature of the new school environment in terms of physical and population sizes, and social support from teachers and the significant others (Sigei, 2013). According to Patrick, Kaplan and Ryan (2007) students' perception concerning their teachers support include beliefs that the teacher cares about their learning, wants to help them learn, and wants them to do their best. This means students expect both emotional and academic support from their teachers. This will eventually facilitate students' willingness to engage cognitively and behaviorally in academic task in turn posting good class performance and display of emotional well-being. These scholars further noted that success in school depends on the extent to which students engage adaptively in classroom learning tasks (Patrick et al., 2007).

A positive teacher-student relationship implies a quality learning environment in the classroom (Patrick, Kaplan & Ryan, 2007). According to these scholars, teachers who trust, care about, and are respectful of students, and who care specifically about students' learning, provide the social-emotional and intellectual support that students need to approach, engage, and persist on academic learning tasks. This also encourages students to develop positive, achievement-related self-perceptions, values, and a sense of school belonging; and more generally to experience a sense of wellbeing when in school. Also as students transit from primary to secondary school, they go from being the oldest in the primary school to the youngest in the high school setting. For some, these changes can over tax their capacity to cope, thereby compromising academic performance (Patrick et al., 2007).

Student-teacher relationships are a critical part of the learning experience. However, this relationship become less personal, less positive, less supportive, less caring, and teachers were found to trust students less in secondary schools. This perceived change in student-teacher relations and student support in high school significantly explained changes in levels of academic, personal, and inter-personal functioning achievement (Barber & Olsen, 2004). The experienced shifts in teacher-student relationship during the transition can create risks for students. These risks include engagement in unbecoming behaviors like delinquency, drug abuse and worse still is the feelings of non belonging which can lead to school dropout (Patrick et al., 2007). They also suggests that classroom climate or environment refers to the more general character of the classroom and teacher-student relationships within the classroom. The aspects of classroom climate include teacher-student relationships, classroom management, and motivational climate.

Indeed, schools are interpersonal settings, in which relationships influence students' motivation, academic performance, and psychosocial adjustment. Relationships with teachers can be of great importance to early adolescents, who are struggling to negotiate changing relationships with their parents and peers. This is because teachers have the advantage of standing outside these struggles; provide a safe context through support and guidance, while transmitting adult values, advice, and perspectives to the students (Reddy, Rhodes & Mulhalla, 2003). Further, involvement with teachers who sometimes serve as confidants, mentors, and friends is very crucial (Reddy et al., 2003). Thus based on studies and the researcher's observation, teachers act as parents and more importantly as key role models to children and adolescents in the school environment (Adesoji & Olatunbosun,

2008; Patrick et al., 2007).

Further, teachers have a crucial role to play in the adjustment of form one students to secondary school. Consequently, they need the knowledge to exercise this duty efficiently and accordingly. To the extent that such knowledge is lacking then they may not help form one students to adjust positively to their new school environment. Hence incidences of indiscipline such as absenteeism, drugs and alcohol abuse, immoral behaviour, deaths, school dropout among other maladaptive behaviour may be witnessed in schools.

Kenya has always placed education as a priority at all levels, promoting it as a key indicator for social and economic development. At independence there were fewer than 900 000 Kenyan children attending primary school. the number of pupils in formal primary schools increased from 8.8 million (4.5 million boys and 4.3 million girls) in 2010 to 9.86 million (4.98 boys and 4.86 girls) in 2011 (Wosyanju, 2012). He further noted that in 2008, the government introduced a free secondary schooling education program that targeted raising student enrolment to 1.4 million by the end of the year. These are clearly indicators that the government is committed to offering basic education to its citizen but very little has been done to ensure school retention through creation of awareness especially concerning to role of teachers with regard to adjustment of students to secondary school.

1.4 Research Materials and Methods

The study used mixed method research design hence collection of quantitative and qualitative data. The study employed two sets of self-administered questionnaire and focus group discussion in data collection. A set for form one students and another one for administrators to gather quantitative. The questionnaires seemed appropriate for the study as it provided an opportunity for the researcher to carry out an inquiry on the influence of teachers on adjustment of form one students to secondary school thus making the study findings more dependable and reliable (Achoka, Odebero, Maiyo & Mualuko, 2007; Kothari, 2004). Qualitative data was gathered using focus group interview and participant observation. Focused group interview or discussion and participant observation used in the generation of data allowed the study to bridge the gap that exist when one relies only on published accounts (Cohen, Marion, & Morrison, 2005) The study utilized multiple techniques to obtain samples from various target population groups that included stratified and purposeful to sample schools, head teachers and heads of counseling department, and students. Hence, stratified sampling technique was employed to sample schools which involved dividing the schools into strata or groups based on categories of schools. The first category was grouping of schools in terms of sex, which included the single sex and mixed schools. Second category was groups of schools in terms of levels: National, Extra County, County and District level of secondary schools. The categorization of secondary schools was deemed crucial because samples were to be drawn proportionately. The stratified sampling method was useful in this research because it gave a blend of randomization and categorization, thereby enabling both qualitative and quantitative method of data collection to be employed in this research. Moreover, the grouping of the population into relevant strata met that the samples were more representative as it ensured that each of the strata was represented proportionally within the sample (Cohen et al., 2005).

1.5 Data Analysis, Presentation, and Interpretations

The objective of this study was to determine the influence of teachers on adjustment of form one student to secondary school. The null hypothesis - H_0 - There exist no significant relationship between teachers and adjustment of Form One students to secondary school. The study sought from students the influence of teachers on adjustment of form one students to secondary school. The questionnaire (Appendix II, Part: C),

students' information concerning influence school environment of teachers on adjustment had some items adapted and others developed. The results of the data have been presented on Table 1.1. From the findings (51) percent students respondent to the questionnaire concerning influence of teachers on adjustment of form one students to secondary school. For instance, they agreed that teachers provide and accommodative learning environment mean of (3.47). They also agreed that they were committed and approachable with means (4.30; 4.11) respectively. These could have led to positive adjustment of form one students to secondary school. However, it is important to note that form one students disagreed with a mean of (2.19) that the secondary school was similar in terms of physical facilities and human populations to their former primary school. This implies that secondary school was larger than their former primary schools in terms of the population of students, administrators and teachers as well as structures and facilities. Therefore, the form one students may not get individual attention as compared to their primary school. This might result to diminishing academic performance and feelings of loneliness.

Table 1.1. Descriptive Statistics concerning teachers influence on adjustment of students to school

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Information about teachers and adjustment	51.7025	9.41678	400
Information on adjustment to secondary school	63.5300	13.41656	400

To establish the actual strength of the relationship between the influence of teachers and adjustment of form one students to secondary school, the study performed Pearson's Product Moment correlation coefficient. The results are presented in Table 1.2

Table 1.2. Correlations on influence of teachers on adjustment of students to secondary school

		Information about teachers and adjustment	Information on adjustment to secondary school
Information about teachers and adjustment	Pearson Correlation	1	.598**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	400	400
Information on adjustment to secondary school	Pearson Correlation	.598**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	400	400

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The coefficient correlation ($r = 0.598$, $P < 0.05$) indicate that there is a positive moderate correlation between teachers influence and adjustment of students to secondary school. Therefore, it is concluded that teachers in secondary school influence the adjustment of form one in secondary schools. Further, a supportive and warm social environment teachers provide for form one students will help them develop a liking for school and hence the learning activities as well which will then translate to positive attitude towards school and the most importantly the will to remain in school. This will also mean good academic performance and social well being for the learners.

1.6 Discussion

The objective of this study was to establish the influence of teachers on adjustment of form one student to secondary school. The correlation results on teacher influence is ($r = 0.598$, $p < 0.05$). This indicates a positive significant relationship between teacher

influence and adjustment of form one students to secondary school. It can be interpreted to mean that teachers play a crucial role in a school environment on issues concerning adjustment of form one students to secondary school. When students perceive them as confidants, mentors and friends, this in turn provides students with emotional support which results to academic, social and psychological adjustment. When psychological adjustment is experienced learners feel they belong and someone cares for them. These feelings provide a conducive atmosphere for one to actively participate in class activities as well as school activities hence high achievement (Reddy et al., 2003).

Teacher support refers to students' perceptions that their teachers care about them and are willing to help them. Feeling cared for by a teacher, encourages students' participation in school and class work. It makes them desire to comply with their teachers' wishes hence lessens worries and concerns about school that may destruct teaching and learning. Teacher support typically refers to emotional or personal support, it involves perceptions that the teacher likes and cares for the student as an individual hence a close and warm relationship. Closeness encompasses the degree of warmth and open communication that exists between a teacher and a student, and may function as a support for the student in the school environment. This implies that having a warm affective tie to a significant figure (teacher) in the classroom may facilitate positive attitudes towards school. Likewise, having open communication with the classroom teacher may foster greater involvement or engagement in school activities. It can be concluded that a teacher play two important roles in the adjustment of form one student to secondary school. First, is the psychological adjustment, when students feeling cared for by their teachers. Second, is the academic adjustment, when students can communicate freely and openly in the classroom with their subject teacher as a result of friendly teaching and learning environment. This observation is supported by empirical findings that students who feel supported by teachers are found to have a positive motivational orientation to school work and they experience positive social and emotional wellbeing (Bru, Stornes, Munthe & Thuen, 2010). Further, Frey et al. (2009) found that students' positive perceptions of school climate and academic motivation were linked to teacher support.

1.7 Conclusions and Recommendations

The findings from the study indicates that teachers are among the most significant people that form one students dependent upon for them to settle in their new secondary school. Teachers play several roles that include confidants, mentoring and general parenting role while students are at school away from their parents. Indeed, evidence highlighted here indicate that the availability of supportive and warm teachers as significant others means alleviation of initial social worries that students develop as they transit from primary to secondary school. The study therefore concludes that teachers play pivotal role during adjustment to secondary school by providing them with a soft landing spot.

The study recommends that the ministry of education needs to create this awareness among teachers so that they can consciously create a supportive and warm social environment for form one students. This will in turn make these become motivated to remain in school, be focused to school work, enjoy teaching and learning activities hence retention and graduation from high school, and entry into college through good performance. Further, Problematic behaviors like absenteeism, faked illness, disinterest on school activities, joining of negative peers and even opting for early school dropout will be less prevalent in a supportive and warm school environment. Student on their part need to be taught social skills like those of making friends for use during transition and school adjustment later in life such skills will be employed not only in making or forming the most solid but also stable friendships. A supportive and warm social environment also leads to better socio-emotional health especially for form one students within and beyond school.

REFERENCES

- Achoka, J. S. K., Odebero, S.O., Maiyo, J.K., & Mualuko, N. J. (2007). "Access to basic education in Kenya: inherent concerns." *Educational Research and Review*, 2 (10), 275-284.
- Adesoji, F.A., & Olatunbosun, S.M. (2008). Student, Teacher and School Environment Factors as Determinants of Achievement in Senior Secondary School. *The Journal of International Social*
- Akos, P. (2006). Extra-curricular participation and the transition to middle school. *Research in Middle Level Education Online*, 29, 9, 1-9.
- Barber, B., & Olsen, H. (2004). "Assessing the Transitions to Middle and High School". *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 19, 3-30.
- Benner, D. A., & Graham, S. (2009). The Transition to High School as a Developmental Process Among Multiethnic Urban Youth. *Child Development*, 80(2), 356–376.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bru, E., Stornes, T., Munthe, E., & Thuen, E. (2010). Students' perceptions of teacher support across the transition from primary to secondary school. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, 54, 6, 519-533.
- Cohen, L., Marion, L., & Morrison, K. (2005). *Research Methods in Education* (5thed.). New York: Routledge
- Ding, C.S. (2008). Variations in academic performance trajectories during high school transition: Exploring change profiles via multidimensional scaling growth profile analysis. *Educational Research and Evaluation*. 14, 4, 305-319.
- Disiye, M. (2012). Influence of Parental Communication on Psychological Adjustment of Secondary School Student in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya. (Unpublished Doctoral Thesis). Moi University, Kenya.
- Dube, A. K. (2011). Factors Affecting Transition, Performance and Retention of Girls' in Secondary Schools in Arid and Semi-Arid Land. A Case of Rhamu Town – Mandera County, Kenya. Unpublished MPhil Thesis, Africa Nazarene University, Nairobi, Kenya.
- Kiuru, N., Nurmi J., Aunola K., Salmela – Aro, K. (2009). Peer group homogeneity in adolescents' school adjustment varies according to peer group type and gender. *International Journal of Behavioral Development* 33 (1) 65-76.
- Kothari, C. R. (2004). *Research Methodology Methods and Techniques*, (2nd Ed). New Delhi: New Age International publisher.
- Patrick, P., Ryan, A.M. & Kaplan, A. (2007). Early Adolescents' Perceptions of the Classroom Social Environment, Motivational Beliefs, and Engagement. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 99, 1, 83–98.
- Reddy, R., Rhodes, J. & Mulhall, A. (2003). The influence of teacher support on student adjustment in the middle school years: A latent growth curve study. *Journal of Development and Psychopathology*, 15, 119 – 138.
- Sigei, K.W. (2013). Analysis of Transition of New Students in Secondary Schools in Bomet District, Bomet County, Kenya. Unpublished Thesis, Kenyatta University.
- Sigei, K.W. (2013). Analysis of Transition of New Students in Secondary Schools in Bomet District, Bomet County, Kenya. Unpublished Thesis, Kenyatta University.
- Sirsch, U. (2003). The Impending Transition from Primary to Secondary School: Challenge or Threat? *International Journal of Behavioural Development*, 27 (5), 385-395.
- Winga, M. A., Agak, J.O., & Ayere A. M. (2011). The Relationship among The Relationship among School Adjustment, Gender and Academic Achievement amongst Secondary School Students in Kisumu District Kenya. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies*, 2 (6): 493-497.
- Wosyanju, C. (2012). "The System of Education in Kenya." Retrieved from [International .iupui.edu/Kenya / resources / Education-in-Kenya.pdf](http://International.iupui.edu/Kenya/resources/Education-in-Kenya.pdf).