

# Assessment of the Influence of Socio-Economic Dynamics on Transition Rate from Primary to Secondary Schools in Turkana Central Sub-County, Kenya

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**Abstract:** Africa has the challenges of low education transition rate from the primary level to secondary school level. This can be attributed to a number of factors among them being over-reliance of donor support program for the education system. The very lack of innovative programs by African governments and not building on sustainable programs in many projects bring in the aspect of overreliance on donor support leading to a situation of crumbling of the programs on the delay of funding or the withdrawal of the same leaving the learners missing out on the education programs and in many cases not transiting to the next level. The purpose of this study was to assess the influence of socioeconomic dynamics on transition rate from public primary schools to secondary schools in Turkana Central Sub County. The study was guided by the objective; to assess the influence of parental income on transition rate from primary to secondary schools in Turkana Central Sub-County. The study employed a concurrent triangulation research design, in this design only one data collection phase is used, during which quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis are conducted separately yet concurrently. The findings are integrated during the interpretation phase of the study. Usually, equal priority is given to both types of research. The target population was 1579 respondents from which an appropriate sample of 178 respondents was selected to represent the study population in data collection. Questionnaire and interview schedules were used to collect data from the respondents. Data was processed through the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 22. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, and presented in tables, while qualitative data from interviews was organized into themes and sub-themes. The study established that parental income had a significant effect on transition. It was recommended that the government should develop clear policies that aim at creating educational awareness which will significantly improve transition from primary to secondary school.

**Keywords:** parental income, Socio-economic dynamics, Transition rate.

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## Introduction

Education is a fundamental right of every person, a key to other human rights, the heart of all developments, the prerequisite for equity, diversity and lasting peace. It is seen as a powerful means to reduce poverty and achieve economic growth (Buchmann and Hannum, 2001). A country's education system in terms of quality has a direct correlation with the country's social, economic and political health. It thus makes education an issue of national importance looking at the premium every person attaches to it. Knowledge and skills provided by an education system should be relevant to the needs of the individual and of the country. These two elements should be measured in positive observable behavior (Armstrong and Allan, 2009).

Education in most parts of Africa receives only 15% of total public spending on education. With a Gross Enrollment Rate (GER) of 26.8% compared to 56.6% for developing countries as a whole, Africa secondary education lags behind. If expected progress towards Universal Primary Education is to be achieved and if efforts on the same scale are not invested in lower secondary, education from primary to Secondary transition rates on Africa will plummet (ADEA, 2004). The primary school transition rate in the Democratic Republic of Congo, in 2007 was 41 percent, which was the equivalent completion rate for the country in the early 1990s while in Bangladesh the primary school transition rate has remained around 50 percent since 2001 (The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2010). Indeed, according to the United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 1991), basic education includes both the primary and secondary education. The transition to secondary is important because it can be argued that this is the time when major changes take place in the pupil's schooling careers in terms of changed learning environment. In addition, this change is accompanied by rapid social, emotional, physical and cognitive development as the move coincides with adolescence.

Compared to primary schools, the learning environment in secondary school is more formal and structured and the child centered approach in primary schools is replaced by subject centered one. In addition, in secondary schools a number of subjects are taught by different subject teachers and rules and regulations are stricter compared to primary schooling. It is further alleged that the teaching methodologies in secondary level differ from those used in primary schools. This, therefore, makes transition to secondary schools a major area of concern to educational planners worldwide (Lockheed, Verspoor, and Associates, 1991). The Koech report stated the following concerning education access in ASAL areas: ASAL areas have specific problems which affect access seriously than those experienced by more economically stable counties. Such factors include, the nomadic way of life, poor economic base, poor communication and infrastructure, lack of water, insecurity and cultural based practices (Republic of Kenya, 1999).

This discouraging phenomenon can be addressed with the support of Kenya government, development partners and willing communities with proper commitment. Declaration of the Free Primary Education (FPE) policy in Kenya in January 2003 by the government (Republic of Kenya, 2005) was a right direction move to try and address some of the concerns raised in the Koech report. Although, this policy lacks the affirmative action element to make it more relevant to areas that have been underdeveloped over long periods of time (Crosby, 2003).

Despite the introduction of the FPE policy, Turkana County just like other ASAL counties in Kenya has continued to lag behind in education access, participation and transition with little effort and care from the government and stakeholders to address those (Achoka *et al.*, 2007).

There is, consequently, need for education managers to be at the middle of community alertness campaigns and affirmative action for gender impartiality in accessing secondary education. Enforcement of “back to school policy” would permit vulnerable female students’ access secondary education subsequent to dropping out due to either pregnancy and/or untimely marriages. The 2012 World Development Report on Gender Equality and Development drew interest to the fact that there are still 31 million girls out of school, almost 4 million “missing” women yearly (meaning the number of women in low- and middle-income countries who pass away relative to their counterparts in high-income countries) and, average wage gaps of 20 percent, down with gaps in labor force involvement (World Bank, 2012).

### **Influence of Parental Income on Transition Rate**

Portioning funds for education program is a global challenges to governments the world over (Mutiga, 2010). This has made education programs in Kenya to be expensive to the parents and the general community taking into account that the government education subsidy programs only cover tuition in secondary schools and the parents are always called to supplement the government efforts to meet the shortfalls in financing education at the primary and secondary school levels.

After the implementation of the free primary education in the year 2003, Republic of Kenya (2009) the number of primary school pupils increased by 18% from 6,063,000 pupils to 7,160,000 pupils in 2003. This created a crisis for the schools in that parents were totally reluctant to support school activities because the nation had made education free. The governments’ grants are not sufficient and at times not distributed when the schools need them. This has caused parents the agony of enrolling their children in the schools which meet their aspirations and taste especially the private ones at an additional cost to them; this is to seek quality education for these children (Kazungu, 2010).

The major hurdle of implementation of FPE with an aim of attaining the universal primary goal is that of financing. The situation of access to the primary education seems far in access to educational opportunities but it reveals that the child is not assured of quality because the rapid rise in number makes teaching and learning difficult (Sawamura, 2010). The Kenya government on the other hand depends majorly on aid from foreign agencies that it calls as development partners. In this case the argument is whether the universalization of free primary education is sustainable by the very virtue of being aid dependent (MOEST, 2017). Connection between primary educations to secondary education in terms of transition is agony to many parents and the community. This is because primary schools are quite committed to ensuring transition and schooling system is motivated by an examination system depending on the scoring of high grades in the primary school leaving examination. This leads to the production of very good results at the primary school examinations but gives pain to parents who cannot afford secondary school education which is not free (Omuga, 2010).

Transition from primary to secondary school is gauged by the enrolment of learners to secondary school Weya (2010). There is a direct reciprocal relation between family incomes and the enrolment rates in secondary schools. This brings out an indicator of financial inequalities in that however bright the child is in primary school, they cannot be assured of progressing to secondary school in the absence of a bursary or well-wishers coming in if the parents of the concerned child are unable. Improvement of transition rate from primary to secondary schools is a crucial issue for the government Republic of Kenya (2011). The

government has set a transition rate of 75% from primary school to secondary school but the actual national transition rate is 79.6% however statistics with admission show rates of 88.2% percent but a decline of the position owing to lack of capacity in meeting the financial cost implications on the part of the parents. Enrolment rates for secondary school education are directly related to family income thus the poorer a child's household, the less likely the child is to attend education in secondary school (UNICEF, 2007).

According to Republic of Kenya (2011) Parents often carry the burden of school fees for secondary education. Education has the capacity to help reduce the poverty situation by way of creating wealth generating activities due to the advancement in technology and increase in the literacy levels in a society. These calls for empowerment of some parents with an aim of helping them realize their obligation of educating the children for the benefit of the citizenry (Amstrong, 2009). According to Marmot (2004) parental occupations are ranked into most prestigious occupation and lower ranking occupation. The most prestigious occupations are physicians, surgeons, lawyers, chemical & biomedical engineers, and communication analysts. While lower ranking occupation are food preparation workers, counter attendants, bartenders and helpers, dishwashers, janitors, maids and housekeepers, vehicle cleaners, and parking lot attendants. The job consider as high status in classification provides more challenging works, ability and greater control over working conditions. While those considered less valued in classification paid significantly less and more laborious, very hazardous and provided less autonomy.

Memo *et al.*, (2010) in their research on the impact of socioeconomic status on students' educational achievement at secondary schools districts of Malir, Karachi, in Indian; They found that there was significance relationship between parents' occupation and or income and students' academic performance in matriculation examination. Students whose fathers have better occupation performed well in matriculation examination than those students whose fathers have a less prestigious occupation. Fathers with the high occupation and earn highly are in a better condition to assist and encourage their children toward educational attainment. They can provide whatever is needed to support and encourage their children morally, intellectually, spiritually and psychologically. But parents with less prestigious occupation due to instability and financial problems cannot provide adequate modern facilities to enhance their children education. Mother's occupation also influences students' academic performance. It was observed that students with a mother who have better occupation and higher earning performed well in matriculation examination than their peers from mothers with less prestigious occupation and less earning. Also Saifullah Saifi and Tariq Mehmood (2011) pointed out that parents' occupation significantly influence students' achievement. He used the data from three different colleges in Gujarat district.

The result indicated that children of government employees secured more marks (60.02%) than the private job holders, because of the certainty and reliability of the government jobs. Parents with government jobs are more secured, and their families are at peace relatively compared to those who work in the private organization or are self-employed. They are always in frustration and lack of confidence at being permanent. Likewise, occupation of the mother has an influence on students' scores. The result of this study indicated that the maximum percentage of marks that is 64.5% is of students who mothers were government workers. So this seems that both fathers and mothers profession and level of earning have a significant influence on students' academic achievement and transition. Qaiser Suleman *et al.*, (2012) conducted a study on effect of parental socioeconomic status on the academic achievement of secondary school students in Karak

district, Pakistan. One thousand five hundred students were selected from 60 government boy's high school in Karak district as a sample of the study. They classified parents into four classes based on their occupation; class 1, class 2, class 3, and class 4. The result indicated that those students whose parents belong to class 1 score high grade than the other classes in comparison.

Likewise, the students belong to class 2, are better than those from Class 3, and then followed by class 3, to class 4 respectively. Therefore, it is important to note that parents' occupation plays a significant role on students' academic performance in school; this also translates to the rate of transition from one level of education to another. The study indicated that parents with prestigious occupation provide necessary facilities needed for the enhancement of their children education. They also give them support and encouragement toward the attainment of educational achievement. On the other hand, students from less prestigious occupations lack so many advantages as compared to those from the parents with high prestigious occupation. They face a lot of challenges both at home and school which hinder them from participating fully in classroom activities, and result in poor academic performance and transition from one level of education to another. Parents with lower or less prestigious occupation are always battling with how to satisfy their basic needs in the life as such they pay little attention to their children education. Therefore, the influence of parents' occupation cannot be overemphasized, even though; other socioeconomic status variables such as income, education do affect students' academic performance and transition.

According to Charles (2013) occupational status measures social position by describing job characteristics, decision making, ability & control and psychological demand on the job. Ahmad *et al.*, (2013) suggested that a series of questions were asked to parents and guardians about the financial circumstances surrounding children school enrolment in Tanzania. Their answer was no more than economic problem militating against their children to school. Wang (2010) also mentioned poverty as a contributing factor of children drop out in rural areas of China. Parents with less prestigious occupation fail to make adequate provisions to support their children in their educational attainment, and result in poor academic performance or even dropout. Ahmar and Anwar (2013) in his analysis of gender and socioeconomic status on the academic achievement of secondary high school students of Luck now a city in India, found out that male and female students perform academically well than their peers from low socioeconomic status. High socioeconomic status parents provide necessary facilities regarding their children education, health and understand their problems related to the adolescent period that affects their academic achievement.

Al-Matalka (2014) in his research conducted to find out the influence of parental socioeconomic status on their involvement in their children's education in Jordan, he revealed that the relationship between parental occupation and parental involvement at home was moderate in some strategies. It shows that parents with the prestigious occupations are more likely to identify their children's problem to give a possible solution. They also help them to do their homework by providing facilities necessary for learning development. It is possible as a prestigious occupation is connected with income level. Prestigious occupation parents have better income stability that would make it easier for them to make adequate provisions to their children's learning development. Looking at a case in India, the socio-economic backgrounds and education both in developed and developing countries, showed that children from families with more economic resources were more often enrolled in school (Mingat, 2007; Huisman and Smits, 2009;) and transitioned more to secondary schools. For wealthier families direct costs associated with education, such as fees, books and

uniforms were less likely to be an obstacle. Opportunity costs of children not being able to help at home, at the family far or by earning additional income through child labor, was also less important to them (Basu, 1999; Evangelista de Carvalho, 2008,). School transfer was a complex process and was mediated by the students individuality, their social class, the resources of their families and factors that related to the secondary schooling system in general as well as by the characteristics of individual secondary schools (O'Brien, 2004).

The relationship between socio-economic backgrounds and educational outcomes had been documented internationally, pupils from lower income and minority ethnic groups had been found to be potentially more at risk of not making a successful transition to post-primary schools (Gutman and Ridgley, 2000). Apart from socioeconomic characteristics parental support had been found to be a crucial factor in facilitating young people's successful integration into post-primary education (Anderson *et al.*, 2000). The nature of authority within the family also influenced the transition process.

Regarding the fathers labor market position, we expected fathers who were salaried employed to be more aware of the importance of education and hence invested more in their children's education (Breen and Goldhorpe, 1997). The children themselves were more aware of the benefits of education and had higher interest in learning. On the other hand unemployed parents were less likely to invest in their children's education when direct occupational transmission or transference of capital is a viable option to obtain a good position in society for their children (Blau and Duncan, 1967; Treiman and Ganzeboom, 1990). Hence farmers and small business owners felt less need to invest in their children's education than people in depended employment. Also for small farmers the opportunity cost of sending their children to school was high, since they were more likely to expect their children to help out tending the land and rearing livestock, especially during peak harvest working times (Bhalotra and Heady, 2003; Bas, Das, and Dutta, 2003).

Major structural adjustment programs and debt servicing programs by government have had far-reaching effects on households. This has had the net effect of the erosion of spending power due to the shrinking of household's disposable incomes and the limited opportunities for earning and livelihoods. This causes many households the burden and suffering of toiling for daily sustenance and meeting of the basic needs in life. Parents are forced to forgo the secondary education for their children especially in the rural areas because they want them to be in regular short term work to earn an income and contribute to the sustenance of the family. There is evidence of reduced enthusiasm to proceed to secondary school in the rural areas because many consider it normal to stop learning and keep the household by way of earning a living (Mfumira, 2010).

There is a direct reciprocal relation between a communities economic activities and the level of education. High agricultural potential and business areas and allied economic activities have a similar proportionate growth in the academic qualifications owing to the capacity of their parents and guardians to pay for it (Waiganjo, 2009). This leads to the social inequalities for advancement in life. The same is also experienced on the transition rates from primary to secondary school level by the very aspects of the cost involved.

### Methodology

The study employed a concurrent triangulation research design to assess the socioeconomic dynamics contributing to transition rate from public primary schools to secondary school level in Turkana central sub county Turkana County. The study population was made up of all

the 48 head teachers of KCPE sitting primary schools, 1530 standard eight pupils, and the Sub County Director of education Turkana central. The study took 10% of the candidates of the sampled schools which was 153 candidates.

The candidates sampled were equally shared among the 24 schools thus each school will have about 6 respondents. The researcher adopted questionnaires and interview schedule as the instruments for the study. A pilot study was done to appraise the questionnaires, soundness of the items in the instruments and to estimate the time scheduled to tackle the items. To establish the reliability of the research instruments, the test-retest method was used. To analyze quantitative data, the data was first screened and arranged in a systematic manner. Qualitative data analysis was used to summarize Information gathered from interviews and secondary data into relevant themes according to the research questions. Multiple regression analysis was applied to test the effect of one variable to the other.

**Discussion**

The objective sought to find out the influence of parental income on transition rate in Turkana Central Sub County. A scale of 1-strongly disagree, 2 disagree, 3-neutral 4 agree and 5 is strongly agree. The findings were recorded in table 1.

**Table 1. Descriptive statistics for Influence of parental income on transition rate**

Statements	1	2	3	4	5
Lack of fees may lead pupils not to proceed to secondary	8.8%	6.5%	7.8%	39.4%	37.5%
Lack of personal effects may lead pupils not to proceed to secondary	0.7%	15.6%	6.5%	41.0%	36.2%
Economic activities may lead pupils not to proceed to secondary	2.9%	2.9%	16.3%	31.6%	46.3%

Source (Field data, 2018)

From table 1, majority of the respondents 39.4% agreed that lack of fees may lead pupils not to proceed to secondary with 37.5% strongly agreeing on the same. Only 8.8% and 6.5% strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively that lack of fees leads to non-transition to secondary schools. Consideration the two divides, it was evident that majority of the parents did not take their children to secondary school due to lack of fees. On Lack of personal effects majority of the respondents 41.0% agreed to the effect that lack of personal effects make pupils not to transit to secondary schools; 36.2% strongly agreeing, 15.6% disagreeing and 0.7% strongly disagreeing on the same. Comparatively, majority of the respondents were in agreement that personal effects lead to many pupils not transiting to secondary schools in the sub county. On Economic activities majority of the respondents, 46.3% strongly agreed that due to children engaging in short term economic activities leads to poor transition to secondary school. 31.6% agreed with a 2.9% both strongly disagreeing and disagreed respectively on the same. This indicated therefore that short term economic activities contribute to non-enrolment in secondary schools in the sub county.

When the teachers were asked to tell what factor majorly made pupils not to transit to secondary schools from their external environment of the school majority of them noted:

*Parental ignorance, lack of enough secondary schools within reach of the communities, learners engagement in short-term economic activities like mat making, 'boda boda' car wash etc; low income in many households, pastoral nature of the community and cultural beliefs and activities....*

This finding was supported by an interviewee who had the following to say:

*...because of parental low income, some pupils are unable to be supported on basic needs, thus, denied chances to sit for examination. This has led to low pupils' transition rates from primary to secondary schools..., Head teacher*

This concurs with the findings done by Okungu (2004) who found out that Lack of personal items causes low transition. Okungu too found that another economic factor which leads to wastage is the costly burdensome extra-curricular activities in our schools. The study also concurs with the findings of Thomas and Stockton (2003) who found out that parental occupation hinders children and more so girls, from attending some school activities.

### Inferential Statistics

#### Multiple Linear Regressions

Multiple linear regressions were computed at 95 percent confidence interval (0.05 margin error) to show the multiple linear relationships between the independent and dependent variables of the study.

#### Coefficient of Determination (R<sup>2</sup>)

Table 2 shows that the coefficient of correlation (R) is positive 0.529. This means that there is a positive correlation between socio-economic dynamics on transition rate in Turkana Central Sub County.

The coefficient of determination (R Square) indicates that 27.9% of transition rate in Turkana Central Sub County is influenced by independent factors. The adjusted R<sup>2</sup> however, indicates that 25.2% of transition rate in Turkana Central Sub County is influenced by factors leaving 74.8% to be influenced by other factors that were not captured in this study.

**Table 2. Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.529 <sup>a</sup>	.279	.252	4.10718
a. Predictors: (Constant), parental income, Family size, initiation rites				

Source (Field data, 2018)

#### Analysis of Variance

Table 3 shows the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The p-value is 0.000 which is < 0.05 indicates that the model is statistically significant in predicting factors influencing transition rate in Turkana Central Sub County.

The results also indicate that the independent variables are predictors of the dependent variable.

**Table 3. ANOVAa Independent Variables**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	786.720	4	171.691	58.650	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	2993.440	245	19.869		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>3780.160</b>	<b>250</b>			

Source (Field data, 2018)



Regression Coefficients

Table 4. Regression Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	43.619	2.638		14.276	.000
	Parental incomes,	.622	.135	.690	4.985	.000
	Family size ,	.354	.112	.280	3.387	.071
	Initiation rites	.378	.171	.350	3.308	.000

Source (Field data, 2018)

Hypothesis One

**Ho1:** There is no significant relationship between Parental incomes and transition rate in Turkana Central Sub County.

From Table 4, parental income ( $\beta = 0.622$ ) was found to be positively related to transition rate. From t-test analysis, the t -value was found to be 4.985 and the  $\rho$  -value 0.000. Statistically, this null hypothesis was rejected because  $\rho < 0.05$ . Thus, the study accepted the alternative hypothesis and it concluded that parental income affects transition rate in Turkana Central Sub County.

Conclusion and Recommendations

On the influence of parental incomes on transition rate from primary to secondary schools among pupils in public primary schools, the study findings suggested that; almost of the respondents agreed (Mean=3.90) that parental low income denied a pupils a chance to access school, hence, miss classes which led to low transition. Similarly, it emerged from the study that respondents almost agreed (Mean=3.96) that parental occupation determined pupils' transition rate in schools. Additionally, the study findings suggested that the respondents agreed (Mean=4.15) that parental low education level led to high transition rate from primary to secondary schools among pupils in public primary schools.

From the study findings, the study concluded that, there is an statistically a significant relationship between parental income and transition rate from primary to secondary schools among pupils in public primary schools since the p-value was found to be .000 being  $< 0.05$ . It was recommended that the policy makers, the government and other stakeholders should create education awareness to parents with low level of education. It was also recommended that the government and other donors should initiate development programmes/projects to which will improve family incomes hence, enabling as many parents to sustain their children in primary through to secondary education.

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