

Determinants of Children's Readiness for Grade One, in Kisii Central Sub-county, Kenya.

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Abstract

School readiness is a joint obligation between the family, school, and community. However, debates of readiness do not always consider the roles that families, school and child factors can and do play in supporting children's school readiness. The specific objectives of the study were to; establish children's readiness for grade one in primary schools in Kisii Central SubCounty, determine the criteria used for assessing children's readiness for grade one in primary schools in Kisii Central Sub-county, examine child factors influencing the child readiness for grade one in primary schools, explore the school factors influencing children's readiness for grade one in primary schools and find out factors within the family that influence children's readiness for grade one in primary schools. This study used Vygotsky's Social Constructivism Theory because it stresses the significance of culture and context in understanding what occurs in society. The study adapted descriptive research design targeting school heads, pupils and teachers from both public and private primary schools. The independent variables were family, school, and child factors, while the dependent variable was child's readiness for grade one. Stratified sampling was used to select schools, while simple random sampling was used to select teachers and pupils. Purposive sampling was used to select head teachers. The study population consisted of grade one pupils, teachers and head teachers in the 115 both public and private primary schools in the subcounty. The sample size was 34 head teachers and 34 teachers and 3316 pupils. Content validity and Cronbach alpha reliability test were used to test the validity and reliability respectively, where a reliability coefficient of 0.7741 was reported. The data collection instruments consisted of interviews for school heads and questionnaires for teachers and observation checklist. Descriptive statistics was used to analyse quantitative data while qualitative data was analysed using thematic content analysis. On child factors, the study found that both academic and non-academic factors influenced the child's readiness to learn in grade one. Family factors such as preparation of a child to school at home, encouragement of parents to the child, parents' participation in school work, the financial status of a family, and parent's level of education influenced children's readiness for grade one. Availability of playing space and materials and availability of adequate physical facilities as school factors also influenced child's readiness to learn in grade one. The study recommends that all children must undergo pre-primary education because it emerged that some children who seek admission to grade one never went through pre-primary and this may hinder their future success in schooling.

Key words: Determinants of Children's Readiness, Grade One, Kisii Central Sub-county, Kenya.

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