

# Teachers' Awareness of the Rights of the Child and its Influence on the Perception of the Rights of Children in Guidance and Counselling Programme among Public Primary Schools in East Pokot Sub-County, Baringo County, Kenya.

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## ABSTRACT

The African Charter on the Rights and the Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) provisions on the rights and welfare of the child are however, best suited to the African child given that its provisions are autochthonous to Africa as a continent. This is especially considering the rich cultural content of the African people. Kenya is a signatory to International and Regional Conventions and Declarations which protect the child from brutality, cruelty and inhuman treatments. Recurrent disruptive cultural practices in arid areas such as cattle raiding, female genital mutilation, early pregnancies and early marriages continue to threaten the effective realization of rights of children and East Pokot Sub-county, Baringo County is no exceptional. The purpose of this study was to determine the teachers' awareness of the rights of the child and its influence on the perception of the rights of children in guidance and counselling programme among public primary schools in East Pokot sub-county, Baringo County, Kenya. The study was guided by the social learning theory and client-centred theory. This study utilized a descriptive research design. The target population was 739 respondents who comprised of 95 teachers, 95 teacher counsellors and 549 senior teachers in 95 primary schools. The sample schools were

selected through proportionate statistical selection giving a total of 304 respondents. The study sample consisted of 76 teachers, 76 teacher-counsellors, 76 senior male teachers and 76 senior female teachers making a total sample size of 304 respondents from the sampled 76 schools. Purposive sampling was used to select teachers, teacher counsellors and senior teachers from the five divisions in East Pokot Sub-County. Three questionnaires were used to collect data from the respondents. The instruments were pilot tested in 10 primary schools in the neighbouring Maralal sub-county in Samburu County. The validity of the instruments was checked by the researcher who also sought the opinion of experts from the Department of Psychology, Counselling and Educational Foundations in Laikipia University. Reliability of questionnaires was determined by using the Cronbach's coefficient alpha. Internal and external reliability coefficients for three teachers' questionnaires were estimated through Cronbach's alpha. The resultant alpha were  $r = .80$  for teachers,  $.75$  for seniors teachers and  $r = .79$  for teacher counsellors questionnaires respectively. The questionnaires were considered reliable after yielding a reliability coefficient alpha of at least 0.70. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) computer programme version 25.0 for windows was utilized to analyze the data. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics including percentages, means and frequencies. Hypotheses were tested using Simple Regression at .05 level of significance. The study concluded that there was positive relationship between Teachers' awareness of the rights of the children has no statistically significant influence on the perception of the rights of children in guidance and counselling programme among public primary schools ( $r = 0.123$ ). The study might increase available knowledge in the field of education on the rights of the students in schools by equipping students with life skills that enabled them face day to day life challenges. The primary school teachers once aware of the significant of children rights, they might build environments in schools that are physically and emotionally safe for learning strengthening Guidance and counselling programme.

**Key words:** Competence Based Curriculum, Free Primary Education, Universal Primary Education, Convention on the Rights of the Child, Education for All

## Introduction

Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Children (GDRC, 1924) stated in part, the child must be the first to receive relief in times of distress, Save the Children (SC, 2019). This document was later extended and adopted by the United Nations in 1959. Rights of the child are a relatively new global concept. However, the history of rights of the child dates back to post First World Wars when millions of children were killed and a lot more were injured, maimed and orphaned, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF, 1996). This preceded the drafting of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child also known as the Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Children

(United Nations Population Fund, 2013). This international document that promoted the Rights of the Child was adopted by the League of Nations in 1924. The provision of education and training to all Kenyans is fundamental to the success of the Government's overall development strategy, especially the attainment of the country's Vision 2030 (Republic of Kenya, 2012). The Government is committed to the realisation of universal access to basic education as prescribed in the Education for All (EFA) initiatives and the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (UNMDG) (United Nation Children's Education Fund, 2012). The government also recognises education as key to the development and protection of the country's democratic institutions and human rights (Republic of Kenya, 2010).

The Government of Kenya has further reinforced protection of girls and women from the harmful practice of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) by enacting the Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act, 2011 into law. This Act prohibits the practice of female genital mutilation to safeguard against violation of a person's mental or physical integrity through the practice of female genital mutilation. It also spells out the penalty due to any person who violates it as being liable to an imprisonment term that is not less than three years or a fine that is not less than two hundred thousand shillings or both (Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act, 2011). Section 24 of the Act states that a person who is aware that Female genital mutilation has been performed or is the process of being carried out or will be done and fails to report to law enforcing officers commits a crime. FGM prevalence is often linked with marriageability, preservation of virginity, social acceptance, family dignity and community identity (UNICEF 2005). The United Nations Children Funds (UNICEF) puts the practice as an extreme example of discrimination based on sex (UNICEF, 2005). In communities where women are strongly subjected to patriarchal domination and economic dependence, marriage is perceived to be the only means to "self-reliance" for girls. There is always an expectation that men will only marry women that have undergone the practice. One reason for the persistence of FGM is that girls are expected to pass through marriage to protect their future economically and achieving the level of woman hood (WHO, 2008).

Teachers are custodians of school going children for nine out of twelve months in a year. They thus play a major role in ensuring that children live in safety and dignity in a nurturing protective

environment. Hence it is critical that all teachers to be aware of the many prevailing social distractors which impact adversely on the development and educational growth of the children. Teachers also need to be aware of legal provisions that exist and can help in safeguarding the rights of the children. Pushpam and Solomon (2017), continue to state that teachers can only be second to parents in educating, influencing and shaping the personality of children. It is important to note that children in every society can be deprived of their rights. This can lead to being subjected to lack of care, exploitation, violence and abuse regardless of their geographical location or social status. Rights deprivation for the children can also happen in the school premises. A child may be attending school while he or she is victim of violence, abuse, exploitation that happens outside the school. Thus the need for teachers to realize that their duty to protect children does not come to an end once they are out of the school compound but rather they need to be inquisitive about the lives of the children outside school. The teachers can achieve this by equipping themselves with right of the child awareness. Teachers, as guidance counsellors must also take on the role of a caretaker, a protector and a catalyst in the protection of right of the child. They should ensure children within their care are protected from all forms of exploitation, abuse, neglect, inhuman and degrading treatment. As such one of the significant topics that should be considered in the teacher training needs to be the right of the child.

According to Pushpam and Solomon (2017), emphasis that awareness about right of the child builds the capacity of teachers in the promotion of right of the child and enables teachers to assist children in their growth, well-being and development. Knowledge on legislations for the protection of right of the child empowers teachers to assure, care and protect all children. There is a relationship between low awareness on right of the child and adverse effects on handling right of the child issues. By taking up suitable measures for care and protection of children in schools, the teachers can play a vital role in ensuring that children live in safe and nurturing educational environment. When teachers are sufficiently aware of right of the child, they can play a role of mediating agent for children in the right of the child protection system. Teachers in East Pokot may be aware of right of the child but this does not correspond with the mediation role they are expected to play since girls continue to be married off and carry pregnancies before they are eighteen years old. They also engage in FGM with the full knowledge of the teachers since they live in the same community. Likewise, boys drop out of school to become community

defenders and engage in cattle rustling. These practices curtail the right of the boys to education, safety and health.

Sources of the information on the rights of children are widely available in Kenya since the country is a signatory to the UNCROC and the African Charter on the Rights of the Child. In the primary school syllabus, Social Studies is taught from standard one to eight. All the Social Studies text books are formatted in the same order and rights of children topics are covered in chapter seven of the text books from standard one to standard eight. According to Kenya Institute of Education KIE (2002), the Social Studies provides the learners with opportunity to appreciate the changing environment in which they live and realization of own place, privileges, rights and responsibilities as citizens. It aims, in part, at making the children understand and appreciate the rights of the individual and responsibility to the attainment of social justice. Kenya Institute of Education KIE (2002) Primary Education Syllabus details the sub-topics of chapter seven for all the classes. In Standard one, the children are taught about the family and child rights where the topic *list the rights of a child* is covered. In standard two the children are taught ways of identifying rights of a child and child rights, types of child abuse in the home, types of child abuse in the school, ways of providing child protection. In standard three, children are taught Protection of children against abuse in the home and school. In standard four, children are taught and expected to identify types of human rights and demonstrate respect for human rights. In standard five, the children are taught rights and responsibilities of citizens. In standard six, children are taught several types of human rights, classification of human right, importance of respecting human rights and abuse of human rights. In standard seven, children are taught importance of respecting human rights. In standard eight, children are taught bill of rights. This ensures that the teachers and pupils are in constant touch with the rights of the children information

According to Sarah (2008), researchers and professionals with an interest in children have grappled with interpreting United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC) and implementing rights for children at international, national and local level. As such, despite all the laws being in place, children in East Pokot Sub County have continued to bear the blunt of

retrogressive cultural practices such as early marriages, early pregnancies, female genital mutilation and cattle raiding. These activities are practiced in a community that perceives them as socio-cultural occurrences. Head teachers and teachers are part and parcel of the community where the practices thrive despite the guidance and counselling role given to the teachers to guide and direct pupils through the education process toward completion. This may have contributed to the worrying trend of dropping out of school especially in primary schools due to pregnancies and early marriages (Society for International Development (SID), 2004). Consequently, head teachers and teachers may be underplaying their role in protecting the children's right to education. The purpose of this study was to determine the teachers' awareness of the rights of the child and its influence on the perception of the rights of children in guidance and counselling programme among public primary schools in East Pokot sub-county, Baringo County, Kenya.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The study was guided by the following research objective:

To establish whether teachers' awareness of rights of the child influences their perception of the rights of children in guidance and counselling programme among public primary schools in East Pokot Sub-county, Baringo County, Kenya.

To achieve the research objective for this study, the following null hypothesis was posited and tested at .05 level of significance:

H<sub>0</sub>1: Teachers' awareness of the rights of the children has no statistically significant influence on their perception of the rights of children in guidance and counselling programme among public primary schools in East Pokot Sub-county, Baringo County, Kenya.

### **Research Methodology**

The study adopted a descriptive research design to establish the teachers' perception of the rights of children in guidance and counselling programme among primary schools in East Pokot Sub County, Baringo County, Kenya. A Research design is the blue print that explains how a

research undertaking will be carried out. As has been pointed out by Burns and Grove (2001), a research design is one of the key enablers of research undertaking and consequently realization of the targeted outcomes. This study was conducted in Tangelbei, Nginyang, Mondri, Kolowa and Churo divisions of East Pokot Sub-county of Baringo County, Kenya. The East Pokot Sub-county borders West Pokot, Turkana, Baringo, Marakwet, Laikipia and Koibatek counties. The population under study comprised of the 95 teachers, 95 teacher counsellors, 377 male teachers and 172 female teachers from 95 Primary schools in East Pokot Sub County giving a total of 739 respondents. Purposive sampling was used to select 76 head teachers, and 76 teacher counsellors, 76 senior male and 76 senior female teachers. Therefore, the sampled primary schools had 76 teachers, 76 teacher counsellors and 152 senior teachers out of which 76 which were male and 76 female and yielded a sample size of 304.

### **Instrumentation**

This study employed questionnaires as the data collection instrument. Questionnaires were administered to the head teachers, teachers appointed and serving as teacher counsellors and senior teachers with long teaching experience and had administrative roles in the school. Teachers were purposely included into the study because they are the implementers and custodians of the children rights in the schools. Head teachers, teachers appointed as teacher counsellors and senior teachers' questionnaires sought to establish their perceptions of rights of children in the guidance and counselling programme in public primary schools.

### **Validity and Reliability of Research Instruments**

The research instruments were systematically evaluated to ensure that they are valid. A valid Instrument is paramount to ensure that the data collected accurately samples out the desired attributes of the population (Borg & Gall, 2007). The questionnaires were subjected to scrutiny by the researcher to ensure that they are responding to the objectives of the study. The opinion of supervisors and other experts from the School of Education of Laikipia University on content validity was also sought.



Reliability of the instruments was tested in a pilot study in Maralal Division in Samburu County to provide the required information on its reliability and establish the time taken to administer the instruments in order to make necessary modifications and adjustments on questionnaires before data collection in the field. Maralal Division was chosen because it is far from the study location and would not thus interfere with the objectivity of actual data collection. The Division also bears similar characteristics of a semi-arid pastoralist inhabited context as East Pokot. The reliability coefficient was estimated by computing Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient. The questionnaires items were considered reliable and thus suitable for data collection after yielding a reliability coefficient of 0.75 for senior teacher questionnaires, 0.79 for teacher' questionnaires and 0.80 for teachers questionnaires.

### **Data Analysis**

The data collected through questionnaires was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The quantitative data obtained was analyzed by the use of descriptive statistics such as percentages, means and frequencies. Rating of values were as 5- Strongly Agree, 4- Agree, 3 Not Sure, 2- Disagree and 1- Strongly Disagree with the statement. Opinions such as Strongly Agree and Agree and Strongly Disagree and Disagree were put together respectively for easier data presentation. Testing of hypotheses was done by Regression. Null ( $H_0$ ) was tested at .05 level of significance. Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) noted that most researchers in education and social sciences use a significance level of .05 to test hypotheses. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25.0 was employed to analyze the data.

### **Results and Discussions**

#### **Distribution of Respondents by Gender**

Gender was conceptualized as maleness and femaleness of a teacher and the distribution presented in Table 1

**Table 1:**

#### ***Distribution of Respondents by Gender***

	Frequency	Percent
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Male	173	56.9
Female	131	43.1
Total	304	100.0

Source: (Field data, 2019)

Table 1 shows that among the respondents male teachers were more at 56.9% (173) while female respondents were the fewer at 43.1% (131) to yield a total of 304 respondents. Research has also shown that pastoralist communities support boy child education as opposed to the girl child as reported by Warrington and Kiragu’s (2011) in their findings among the Maasai in Kajiado that fathers did not value education for their daughters, hence gave minimal support to those who did manage to go to school. This can be generalised for a similar pastoralist community in East Pokot which explains lower number of female teachers than men teachers in primary school set up establishment.

**Distribution of Respondents by Position Held in School**

Age was clustered into four categories each with an interval of 10 years ranging from 31 to 40 years and the final category covered 51 to 60 years the official retirement age for government employed primary school teachers in Kenya. This was done in view that with a self-response questionnaire; respondents feel more comfortable giving their age in terms of a range than stating the actual age in years. The distribution respondents were as indicated in Table 2

Table 2:

***Distribution of Respondents by Position Held in School***

	Frequency	Percent
Senior Teacher	150	49.3
Teacher	79	26.0
Teacher Counsellor	75	24.7
Total	304	100.0

Source: (Field data, 2019)

As shown in Table 6, 49.3% (150) of the respondents held the position of senior teacher in the school while 20% (79) held the position of a teacher and 24.7% (75) held the position of teacher counsellors. The information reveals that administrators in primary schools were more than teacher counselors. The objective of the study was to establish whether teachers' awareness of right of the child influences teachers' perception of the rights of children in guidance and counselling programme among public primary schools in East Pokot Sub-county, Baringo County.

To achieve the objective the following hypothesis was formulated:

**H<sub>0</sub>1: Teachers' awareness of the rights of the child has no statistically significant influence on the perception of the rights of children in guidance and counselling programme among public primary schools in East Pokot Sub-county, Baringo County.**

The hypothesis postulated that that teachers' awareness of the rights of the children has no influence on the perception of the rights of children in guidance and counselling programme among public primary schools in East Pokot Sub-County, Baringo County Kenya.

To ascertain the truth in the assumption simple regression analysis of teachers' awareness of the rights of the children and the influence on the perception of the rights of children in guidance and counselling programme among public primary schools was done and the results presented in Tables 3 and 4.

The teachers' awareness of the child rights identified 9 items with perception of the rights of children. On the other hand, perception was conceptualized a composite variable of non-missing responses on 9 items measuring the respondents' perception of right of the child.

Table 3 presents Pearson's Correlation between Teachers' Awareness of the Rights of Children and their Perception of the Rights of Children.

*Table 3:*

***Pearson’s Correlation Coefficient between Teachers’ Awareness of the Rights of Children and their Perception of the Rights of Children***

Model	r	Adjusted Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics		
				r Square	F	Sig. F Change
1	.123 <sup>a</sup>	.015	30.378	.015	4.618	.032

a. Predictors: (Constant), Teachers Awareness

Source: (Field data, 2019)

Table 3 indicates that the Pearson Correlation Coefficient between Teachers’ Awareness of the Rights of children and their perception of the rights of children was statistically significant at .05 level of significance ( $r = .123, p = 0.032$ ). The r squared was found to be 0.015. This indicates that 1.5% of the variance in teachers’ perception of the rights of children could be explained by the teachers’ awareness of the rights of children in the guidance and counselling program in primary schools.

Table 4 presents Regression analysis of Teachers’ Awareness of the Rights of Children and their Perception of the Rights of Children.

**Table 1:**

***Simple Regression Analysis of Teachers’ Awareness of the Rights of Children and their Perception of the Rights of Children***

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4261.728	1	4261.728	4.618	.032 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	278685.311	302	922.799		
	Total	282947.039	303			

a. Dependent Variable: Teachers' Perception Rights of Children

Source: (Field data, 2019)

From Table 4, the F value was found to be significant ( $F (1, 303) = 4.618, p = .032$ ). Therefore null ( $H_0$ ) that teachers’ awareness of the rights of the children has no statistically significant

influence on the perception of the rights of children in guidance and counselling programme among public primary schools in East Pokot Sub-county, Baringo County was accepted at .05 significance level. It was therefore concluded that teachers' awareness of the rights of the children does significantly influence on the perception of the rights of children in guidance and counselling programme among public primary schools in East Pokot Sub-county, Baringo County, Kenya.

The study determined that teachers' awareness of right of children to education, love, socialize, life, shelter, security, good health care and parental care did not influence their perception of the rights of children in guidance and counselling programme. It was therefore concluded that teachers' awareness does not influence their perception of rights of children in guidance and counselling programme. This indicates that, teachers, whether they have awareness of rights of the child or not, are likely to protect and enhance access the rights of children in guidance and counselling programme in public primary schools. This means all teachers despite their awareness of rights of the child have high perception and would support the implementation of the rights of the children in guidance counselling programme.

This is in agreement with what Victoria (2015) reported in her study that teachers were positive in 15 items but negative in 7 items of the questionnaire. This result gave a proportion of 68% positive and 32% negative. This negativity implies that the teachers/caregivers perception ran contrary to the expectations of the Childs Rights Act. One of the rights which the teachers and the caregivers were negative to is children's rights to dignity. The teachers were of the view that they have rights to batter the children and inflict corporal punishment on those who err. Unfortunately, this right for the children is often violated by in the Nigerian school system, which ought to protect it. The belief of the teachers is rooted in the traditional way of life in which no external authority has right to question family members on the punishment that they

Since  $p = .032$  is less than .05 the hypothesis was rejected. It was therefore concluded that teachers' awareness of the rights of the children does significantly influence on the perception of the rights of children in guidance and counselling programme among public primary schools in East Pokot Sub-county, Baringo County, Kenya. This finding agrees with Pushpam and Solomon (2017), who emphasised that awareness about right of the child builds the capacity of teachers in the promotion of right of the child and enables teachers to assist children in their growth, well-

being and development. Knowledge on legislations for the protection of right of the child empowers teachers to assure, care and protect all children.

### **Summary of the Findings**

#### **The Influence of Teachers' awareness of the rights of the child and Their Perception of the Rights of Children in Guidance and Counselling Programme among Public Primary Schools in East Pokot Sub-county, Baringo County, Kenya**

To achieve the objective the following hypothesis was formulated:

**H<sub>0</sub>1: Teachers' awareness of the rights of the children has no statistically significant influence on the perception of the rights of children in guidance and counselling programme among public primary schools in East Pokot Sub-county, Baringo County, Kenya.**

The hypothesis was tested using Simple Regression test. The results showed that;

1. Teachers' awareness of the rights of the children accounted for 1.5% ( $r^2 = 0.015$ ) of the variance on the perception of the rights of children in guidance and counselling programme among public primary schools in East Pokot Sub-county, Baringo
2. Teachers' awareness of the rights of the children had statistically significant influence ( $F(1, 303) = 4.618, p = .032$ ) on the perception of the rights of children in guidance and counselling programme among public primary schools in East Pokot Sub-county, Baringo County, Kenya.
3. Therefore the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) was rejected.

### **Conclusions of the Study**

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were made:

- i. Awareness of right of the child does not significantly influence respondents' perception of the rights of children in the guidance and counselling programme among public primary schools in East Pokot Sub-County, Baringo County, Kenya.

- ii. Source of awareness does not significantly influence respondents' perception of the rights of children in the guidance and counselling programme among public primary schools in East Pokot Sub-County, Baringo County, Kenya.

### **Recommendation of the Study**

Based on the conclusions of the study, the following recommendations were made:

- i. It was realized that awareness of rights of the child positively correlated with high perception of the rights of children in guidance and counselling programme among public primary schools in East Pokot Sub-county, Baringo County. Awareness creation opportunities may be made available for the teachers in East Pokot so as to increase access to rights of children for pupils in East Pokot. This could be achieved through school circulars and memos, seminars, workshops and other social gatherings in the public primary schools in East Pokot and other pastoral communities.
- ii. The study established that source of awareness of rights of the child does not significantly influence their perception of the rights of children in guidance and counselling programme among public primary schools in East Pokot Sub-county, Baringo County. However, media and Kenyan Constitution 2010 significantly influence teacher counsellors' perception of the rights of children in guidance and counselling programme. It is recommended that more awareness may be created through media and Kenyan Constitution 2010 to increase perception of the rights of children in guidance and counselling programme among public primary schools in East Pokot Sub-county, Baringo County.

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