# Teaching Experience of Teachers and its Influence on the Perception of the Rights of Children in Guidance and Counseling Programme among Public Primary Schools in East Pokot Sub-County, Baringo County, Kenya

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### **ABSTRACT**

The teaching of children's rights has been at the centre of many debates in recent years. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Articles 29 and 42, mentions that children are entitled to be informed of their legal rights and that they should respect human rights (United Nations, 1989). It is argued that this will help them become democratically informed citizens. Children who learn about their rights tend to be more supportive of human rights issues and even volunteer in programmes that promote other people's rights (Howe & Covell, 2010). Rights protect children from potentially harmful situations. Hence, they should be taught at all levels so that they become common knowledge. Countries are obliged to teach children about their rights, and their educational practices should be in line with the rights of the child (Covell, Howe, & McNeil, 2010). The purpose of this study was to determine whether teaching experience of the teachers influences their perception of the rights of children in guidance and counseling programme among public primary schools in East Pokot Sub-county, Baringo County, Kenya. The study was guided by the social learning theory and client-centered theory. This study used a descriptive research design. The study population was 739 teachers comprising of 95 public primary schools with a total of 95 head teachers, 95 teacher counsellors and 549 senior teachers. The sample schools were selected using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table which yielded 76 out of 95 schools. Proportionate sampling was used to select 76 head teachers, 76 teacher-counsellors, 76 senior male teachers and 76 senior female teachers to yield a total of 304 respondents. Data collection tool was questionnaire. The instrument was pilot tested in 10 primary schools in Maralal Sub-county in Samburu County for validity and reliability. The validity of the instruments was checked by the researcher who also sought the opinion of experts from the School of Education in Laikipia University. Reliability of questionnaires was determined using the Cronbach's coefficient alpha. The reliability coefficients for questionnaires were estimated through Cronbach's alpha. The resultant alpha were r= .80 for head teacher .75 for seniors teachers and r= .79 for teacher cousellors 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 t test, ANOVA and simple regression at.05 level of significance. The study concluded that teaching experience do not influence the perception of the rights of children in guidance and counselling programme among public primary schools in East Pokot Sub-County, Baringo County, Kenya. Findings might benefit the County Ministry of Education officers, parents, teachers and other stakeholders in implementation of children policies in guidance and counselling programme in primary schools.

**Key words:** Teaching Experience, Free Primary Education, Universal Primary Education, Convention on the Rights of the Child, Education for All

### Introduction

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). This international document that promoted the Rights of the Child was adopted by the League of Nations in 1924. Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Children of 1924 stated in part, in times of distress children should be perceived differently from adults since they are vulnerable and they should be the first to receive relief during conflict or catastrophe, Save the Children (SC, 2019). This document was later extended and adopted by the United Nations in 1959. With this background, the United Nations Human Rights Commission group enhanced the global perception of the rights of the children by drafting the Convention on the Rights of the Child that was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 20th November, 1989.

The Children Act 2001 brought in a new perception of the rights of children in Kenya. It changed the perception of some customary accepted practices such as female circumcision, early marriage or other cultural rites, customs or traditional practices that are likely to negatively affect the child's life, health, social welfare, dignity or physical or psychological development as stated in The children Act (2001) article 14. The Act further spells out parental responsibility in article 23 which states in part that parents have a responsibility and the duty to maintain the child and in particular to provide him or her with adequate diet; shelter; clothing; medical care including immunization; and education and guidance.

In Nigeria, studies show that the correlation which exists between child abuse and teenage pregnancy is a clear indication that if the problem of child abuse in all forms is genuinely attended to, it will reduce the rate of teenage pregnancy among the female teenagers (Okunalo and Ojo 2012). This is especially in the case of the sexual abuse. In Kenya, abandonment and negligence were the most commonly cited aspects of child abuse when adults in pastoral communities were questioned on the subject (African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect, 2000).

The African Charter on the Rights and the Welfare of the Child puts into consideration the rich cultural content of the African people taking into consideration the virtues of the children's cultural heritage, historical background and the values of the African civilization which would inspire and characterize their reflection on the concepts of the rights. The African Charter on the Rights and the Welfare of the Child strictly prohibits harmful cultural practices such as female circumcision and forced marriages, all which are especially persistent in sub-Saharan Africa as an effort in protecting children rights (UNICEF, 2005).

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 to preservation of virginity, social acceptance, family dignity and community identity which enhances girl child marriageability, (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). 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.

The Children Act No. 8 of 2001 is the principal statute that deals with matters touching on a child's rights and welfare in Children Act- Kenya (Laws of Kenya, Revised 2018). It contains the whole framework of a child's rights as enacted by parliament. In a nutshell, the Act contains an exhaustive list of some of the rights as contained in Part II of Children Act No. 8 of 2001. Some of the rights include parental care, education, religious education, healthcare, name and nationality, privacy, leisure and recreation and special rights due to disabled children. The Children Act also states that children should protected from child labour and armed conflict, abuse, harmful cultural rites, sexual exploitation and drugs.

The Government of Kenya has enacted the Children Act 2001 to protect the rights of the child. The Children Act 2001 clearly states that the child shall not be subjected to harmful cultural practices. The Legal Notice, No. 95 of the Kenya Gazette (Government of Kenya, 2001) banned canning in schools and obligated teachers to implement guidance and counseling programme to enhance access to rights of children and to help the pupils make informed educational and sociocultural choices. However, in East Pokot Sub-county, UWEZO (2012) report states that four out

ten children are out of school due to insecurity arising from cattle rustling as young men raid for cattle for wealth and to raise dowry. The report further states that East Pokot had the lowest reading ability at 39 % and below against 50% to over 70% recorded in the other sub counties in Baringo County. The insecurity draws boys out of school as they are engaged in community defence and cattle rustling. The socio-cultural setting precipitates the girl child to drop out of school to engage in old age retrogressive practices such as early marriages, early pregnancies and female genital mutilation. These cultural practices infringe on the children's right to education, health and psychological wellness.

# **Objectives of the Study**

The study was guided by the following research objective:

To determine whether teaching experience of the teachers influences their perception of the rights of children in guidance and counseling programme among public primary schools in East Pokot Sub-county, Baringo County, Kenya.

To achieve the research objectives for this study, the following null hypotheses were posited and tested at .05 level of significance:

H<sub>0</sub>1: Teachers' teaching experience 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 determine whether teaching experience of the teachers influences their perception of the rights of children in guidance and counseling programme among public primary schools in East Pokot Sub-county, Baringo County, Kenya. According to Sekeran (2003), descriptive research design is used to obtain information concerning the current status of the phenomena. This study was conducted in Tangulbei, Nginyang, Mondi, 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

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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.

# 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 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<sub>0</sub>1) 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**

# **Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents**

The research targeted 95 teachers, 95 teacher counsellors, 377 male teachers and 172 female teachers from 95 Primary schools in East Pokot Sub County giving a total a population of 739. The researcher sampled 76 out of 95 primary schools in East Pokot Sub County using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table through proportionate stratified random sampling. The male and female senior teachers were selected to achieve gender balance.

Table 1

Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Gender	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)
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.

# 4.2.5 Distribution of Respondents by Teaching Experience

Experience in teaching was categorized into four clusters ranging from 0-5 years, and running through to 16 years and above. The distribution of the respondents here were as indicated in Table 10

Table 2

Distribution of Teachers by Teaching Experience

Teaching Experience	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)
Below 6 years	51	16.8
6-10 years	94	30.9
11-15 years	74	24.3
16 years and above	85	28.0
Total	304	100.0

Source: (Field data, 2019)

Table 2 shows that 30.9% (94) had been in the teaching service for a period ranging from 6 -10 years, 28.0% (85) had been in the service for a period ranging from 16 years and above, 24.3% (74) had been in the service for a period ranging from 11-15 years and 16.8% (51) had the least teaching experience below 6 years. The longer the teaching period, the higher the experience in classroom teaching. This is coupled with career, social and cultural challenges that pupils' present to the teachers during guidance and counselling services. Long teaching experience helps teachers to perfect the skill of preparing students for success in academic and personal life. This motivates pupils to excel and seek guidance and counselling whenever they encounter challenges.

To achieve the objective the following hypothesis was formulated:

H<sub>0</sub>1: Teachers' teaching experience 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.

The hypothesis presumed that teaching experience of the teachers 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 establish the truth of this assumption, ANOVA was carried out. Teaching experience was conceptualized in terms of the number of years they had spent in teaching profession. The four clusters of respondents' distribution by professional age were cross-tabulated with perception of the rights of children among the three categories of respondents.

Table 1

Mean of Teachers' Teaching Experience and their Perception on the Rights of Children

	Mean
Duration in teaching profession	
Below 6 years	43.57
6-10 years	45.72
11-15 years	54.51
Above 15 years	50.73
Total	48.90

Source: (Field data, 2019)

Table 4 presents ANOVA of Teachers' teaching experience and their perception of the rights of Children among primary school pupils.

Table 4

ANOVA of Teachers' Teaching Experience and Perception of the Rights of Children

ANOVA								
Teachers' Perception Rights of Children								
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.			
Between Groups	5014.458	3	1671.486	1.804	.146			
Within Groups	277932.581	300	926.442					
Total	282947.039	303						

Source: (Field data, 2019)

From Table 4 the F value was found no to be significant (F (3, 300) = 1.804, p = .146). Therefore the null hypothesis (Ho1) that teachers' teaching experience 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 was accepted at .05 significance level. It was therefore concluded that teachers' teaching experience does not significantly influence the perception of the rights of children in guidance and counselling. According to the results in Table 5, the mean score was highest for the teachers with 11 - 15years of teaching experience (mean = 54.51), followed by those with 6 - 10 years of teaching experience (mean = 45.72), followed by those who had below 6 years of teaching experience (mean = 43.57) and the least mean was posted by teachers who had above 15 years of teaching experience (mean = 48.90). It was therefore concluded that the teachers' work experience does not significantly influence their perception of the rights of children in guidance and counselling. This means the experience possessed by teachers in teaching profession does not influence their perception of rights of children. Thus it implies that the newly employed teachers and those who are about retire will have equal chance or supporting rights of children in primary schools. The findings agree with Beale and McCay (2001) who emphasise on guidance counsellor's ability (and not teaching experience) to articulate their role in enhancing students' academic success. They further mention that prospective guidance counsellors should be able to discuss ways to

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identify and remove obstacles of classroom achievement for all students on how to maintain the high achievers and assist the low achievers to improve performance and potential guidance counsellors should be able to describe ways of improving the curriculum.

The findings disagree with Karangu and Muola (2011) who found out that the school counsellors and principals feel that the experience of a teacher is important in effective delivery of guidance and counselling services. Huang and Moon (2009) have averred that although teaching experience is associated with learners' achievement gains, achievement returns to experience are most steep in initial years, in most cases within the first ten years in the profession. In other words, other factors held constant (e.g., academic qualification and nature of the school climate), teachers are likely to reach a plateau in regard to their output after the end of the first decade of their career.

This implies that teachers' professional training in counselling does influence their perception of the rights of the children in guidance and counselling programme in public primary schools was accepted. This indicates that teachers' despite their professional training in counselling, are not 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 professional training in counselling have high perception of and would support the implementation of the rights of the children in guidance counselling programme. These findings are in tandem with a study by Orodho and Ondieki (2015) which established that teachers teaching in both lower and upper primary were professionally qualified with certificates raging from (P1) to a degree certificates.

# **Summary of the Findings**

Influence of Teachers' Teaching Experience 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

To achieve the objective the following hypothesis was formulated:

H<sub>0</sub>1: Teachers' teaching experience 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.

The hypothesis was tested using ANOVA test. The ANOVA test showed that;

- 1. The F value was found not to be significant (F (3, 300) = 1.804, p = .146).
- 2. The null hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>3) was accepted.
- 3. The teachers' teaching experience has no influence on the perception of the rights of children in guidance and counselling programme.

# **Conclusions of the Study**

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusion was made:

 Teachers' teaching experience 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, Kenya.

# **Recommendations of the Study**

Based on the conclusions of the study, the following recommendation was made:

i. The study showed that teachers' teaching experience 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, Kenya. As such, it is recommended that teaching experience may not be used as a variable in allocating guidance and counselling teachers as it does not influence their perception of the rights of children.

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