

**SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT AND LEARNING ADAPTATION OF PRE-SCHOLARS
IN SELECTED PRE SCHOOLS OF MASINGA DISTRICT, KENYA**

A Thesis presented
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Kampala International University
Kampala Uganda

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree Master of
Early Childhood and Primary Education

BY

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DECLARATION A

"This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a Degree or any other academic award in any University or Institution of Learning".

Name and Signature of Candidate



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Date

13/8/2012

DECLARATION B

"I confirm that the work reported in this thesis was carried out by the candidate under my supervision".

Dr (Mrs) Anunaka, James B.

Name and Signature of Supervisor

13/8/12.

Date

DEDICATION

My dedication goes to my family especially my dear husband for his love, financial and moral support to ensure that this thesis is a success.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Firstly, the researcher's gratitude goes to God who has given her the strength and courage to undertake this research. She also owes a lot of appreciation to all those who assisted her in carrying out this research.

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ABSTRACT

The study was on the school environment and learning adaptation in selected pre schools. The purpose of the study was to investigate on how school environment influences the learning adaptation among pre-scholars. The objectives of the study were to examine the demographic aspect of respondents, to identify the school environment, to identify the level of learning adaptation and to establish the relationship between school environment and learning adaptation. The sample population involved teachers and pre-scholars; the sample size was 120 derived from Slovens Formula. Data was analyzed using SPSS by presenting data with frequency tables, pie charts and bar graphs. Data was analyzed using frequency mean, and Pearsons' linear coefficient of co-relation. To make analysis easier SPSS was used as it makes interpretation easier. Pie charts and bar graphs were used. Findings of the survey indicated that the social adaptations, physical infrastructure were highly influential on the learners' adaptation. Learners will adapt according to the school environment. The survey was hindered by suspicious and unwilling respondents. The school environment directly influences the learners in their adaptation.

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CHAPTER ONE

THE PROBLEM AND ITS SCOPE

Background of the Study

Early child hood programs today can trace their development back to early philosophers who believed that all children should attend to school and learn to speak by speaking, to write by writing and to reason by reasoning. Philosophers like Jean Rosseau (1712-1778) and Petalozzi Johann (1746-1827) made important contribution to early child hood education. Rosseau thought that education decision should be made on the basis of the child's nature. He also developed a stage theory of child development based on his belief that children from birth to age five learn best from physical activities and children from age five to twelve learn best by direct experiences and exploration of the environment. He believed in having children participate in real meaning full activities and in grouping children of various ages so that the older ones can help the young ones

According to Abagi, early childhood education recognizes the critical importance of preschool years in a child's social physical and educational development. Many countries have taken step to provide stimulating learning opportunities and day care arrangements for most of all young children.

Learning is essentially adapting to our constantly changing environment. Through adaptation, we are able to adopt new behaviors that allow us to cope with change. Through learning experiences and play, teachers provide a wide range of concrete, developmentally appropriate activities and field trips that provide opportunities to explore and celebrate similarities and differences among children, teachers take the opportunity to discuss with children racial, culture and gender biases.

Teachers endeavor to establish a caring community life with respect for individual differences. The classroom environment is organized to provide opportunities for children to develop independent behaviors and to act out real-life situations. The environment reinforces those skills and concepts that encourage good citizenship and

develop the child's capacity to participate in a culturally diverse, democratic society in an increasingly interdependent world.

According to Bernnet, the pre-school environment, materials, and teaching strategies should be adapted as appropriate to meet the needs of all children. The needs of young learners are as diverse as the homes and communities from which they come. There will be learners from many cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds. There will be learners from homes and communities where the dominant language is not English. There will be learners needing specialized and focused interventions to support and sustain their educational progress.

Preschoolers with disabilities demonstrate a broad range of learning, cognitive, communication, physical, sensory, and social/emotional differences that may necessitate adaptations to the early childhood education program. Each preschooler manifests his or her learning abilities, learning style, and learning preferences in a unique way.

Consequently, the types of adaptations needed and the program in which the adaptations will be implemented are determined individually. Adaptations are not intended to compromise the learning outcomes. Instead, adaptations provide children with disabilities the opportunity to develop their strengths and compensate for their learning differences as they work toward the learning outcomes for all children.

Childhood experiences can have a long-lasting implication for one's future. The earliest years of schooling can promote positive developmental experiences and independence and encourage the uniqueness of each child. Preschool programs can be planned and structured so that all children develop the belief that they are "more alike than different." Careful planning is needed to ensure the successful inclusion of preschoolers with disabilities in early childhood education programs. The focus should be on identifying individual student needs, linking instruction to the early childhood curriculum, providing appropriate supports and program modifications, and evaluating student progress (Bernett 2003).

Statement of the problem

School environment in pre-schools is key element among early childhood centers. Most of the schools in Kenya particularly Machakos district, the early childhood centers are in the deep interiors and are owned by the parents and the community. The stake holders in Early childhood centers are not funded or supported by the government, therefore it leaves this department a lot to be desired in terms of facilities recruitment of both children and teachers. Early childhood educators and family members play powerful and critical roles in establishing and supporting learning environments at home, in community settings, and in traditional school settings (Feinburg & Mindess, 1994; Smutny, 1998). Most of the children are from humble backgrounds and this leaves a lot to be desired as far as school environments are concerned. With the upcoming of free primary education, there are lots of numbers in pre-school to primary. This is one way may affect the pre-scholar adaptations as far as social, physical and academic adaptations. Overall effectiveness of an early childhood program is dependent upon several factors: quality staff, an appropriate learning environment, proper grouping practices, appropriate curriculum, and parental involvement. Children have a safe, nurturing and stimulating environment, with the supervision and guidance of competent, caring adults. Some groups of children have higher rates of participation in early childhood education programs than others. Children living in low-income households are less likely to be enrolled in ECE than those children in families living above the poverty line

Early childhood education can produce significant gains in children's learning and development. This education program in Kenya contains a clear statement of goals and philosophy that is comprehensive and addresses all areas of child development, the program engages children in purposeful learning activities and play, instructed by teachers who work from lesson and activity plans, and Teachers who frequently check children's progress. With above background there is need to investigate the school environment and the learners' adaptations

Purpose of the Study

- i. To test the hypothesis of no significant relationship between school environment and learning adaptation of pre-scholars.
- ii. To validate the Lev-vygotsky's theory of school development(1962).
- iii. To generate data on school environment and learning adaptation of pre-scholars
- iv. To add to the existing body of knowledge and generate new data on school environment and learning adaptation.

Research Objectives were

1. To assess the profile of the respondents in terms of:
 - 1.1 Gender
 - 1.2 Age
 - 1.3 Qualifications under the education discipline
 - 1.4 Number of years teaching experience
2. To examine the degree of conduciveness of school environment factors; class room materials, cultural diversity, curriculum and physical facilities that affect scholars in selected pre schools of Masinga District.
3. To assess the level of learning adaptations of pre scholars.
4. To establish if there is a significant relationship between the degree of conduciveness of school environment factors and pre-scholar adaptation to learning in selected preschools of Masinga District

Research Questions

This study sought to answer the following research questions:

What is the profile of respondents in terms of;

1.1 Gender?

1.2 Age?

1.3 education qualification

1.4 Experience of teachers

2. What are the degrees of conduciveness of school environmental factors affecting pre scholars in terms of classroom materials, cultural diversities, architectural, curriculum and instructional materials?

3. What is the level of learning adaptations of pre scholars in selected pre schools of Masinga District?

4. Is there a significant relationship between the degree of conduciveness of school environment and learning adaptation of preschoolers in selected preschools of Masinga District?

Hypothesis

There is a significant relationship between degree of conduciveness of school environment and learning adaptations of pre-scholar learners.

Scope of the study

Geographical Scope

The study will be conducted in selected pre schools of Masinga district in Kenya the district has got a number of pre schools.

Content Scope

The study intends to examine school environment and learning adaptation of preschoolers, learning environment and it's significant on the learning of pre scholars, curriculum determination and instruction for all preschool children in selected

preschools, cause and effect relationship between the independent variables (School Environment) and dependent variable (learning adaptation).

Theoretical Scope

This study was based on Social Development Theory of Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934) which will be proved or disproved in this study.

Time scope

The study was carried out in a period of three months April to June.

Significance of the Study

The following disciplines will benefit from the findings of the study.

The **early education teachers** of the selected pre schools will recognize the roles they have to play in curriculum construction of preschool children

The **preschool owners/stakeholders** will aim at achieving the goal of good resource management; monitor school effectiveness based on the curriculum instruction, learning environment and teaching learning expectations of pre schools in terms of quantity and quality.

The **educational policy makers and planners** will form early education advisory boards for the better curriculum construction of pre schools, preschool teacher associations will be encouraged so that they pull experience together for better early education

The **future researchers** will utilize the findings of this study to embark on a related study.

Operational Definitions of Key Terms

Profile characteristics are attributes looked for in this study in terms of gender, age, qualifications, number of years teaching experience, and marital status.

Adaptation: It is a term referring to the ability to adjust to new information and experiences in learning environment.

Pre-School: School for children between the ages of two and five.

Pre-scholars: children between ages of two and five

School environment: the surroundings within a teaching and learning area.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Concepts, Opinions, Ideas from Authors/ Experts

Early childhood education

As a preamble to school environment for preschool and pre-scholars.

According to the U.S. the developmental definition of early childhood education spans the human life from birth to age eight. However, typically early childhood education covers the period from birth to when a child starts school and this can be as early as five years of age. Driscoll, M. P. (1994).

Early childhood education is the term commonly used to describe the formal teaching and care of young children by people other than their family or in settings outside of the home. Stubbs, S. (1994) Early childhood has been defined as a period of life between 0 to 8 years of age. This is the period of greatest growth and development, when the brain develops most rapidly, almost at its fullest. It is a period when walking, talking, self-esteem, vision of the world and moral foundations are established

Pascopella, Angela. (2004) early childhood education (ECE) programs include any type of educational program that serves children in the preschool years and is designed to improve later school performance. In the second half of the twentieth century, the early education system in the United States grew substantially. This trend allowed the majority of American children to have access to some form of early childhood education.

The terms "early childhood learning," "early care," and "early education" are comparable with early childhood education. The terms Day care and Childcare do not embrace the educational aspects. Many childcare centers are now using more educational approaches. They are creating curricula and incorporating it into their daily routines to foster greater educational learning. The distinction between childcare

centers being for care and kindergartens being for education, for example, has all but disappeared in countries that require staff in different early childhood facilities to have a teaching qualification

H. K. Manani (2002). In Kenya, all programs must follow national "Guidelines for Early Childhood Development" that describes objectives, content, methods and recommend a thematic integrated approach. "Due to the diverse nature of Kenya's people, culture, and environment . . . teachers are encouraged to use a localized curriculum which is developed for each district by the district centers for early childhood education

Early child hood teachers are less qualified. Majority of them don't posses any general qualifications of handling young children there is no trained teacher in this area of Early Childhood Care and Development. Charney, Ruth S. (1992) Qualified teachers are lacking; facilities are very poor; therefore, there must be a mandate and some positive steps in the right direction. Policies must be set and guidelines implemented by the government to buttress the work of Early Child hood education.

As much as early childhood education is of paramount importance in Kenya, a lot needs to be done to remove stress in the children. Parents need to understand that the health of their children is much more important than anything else. As a parent, get a preschool that is near where you stay. This will help the child not to wake up so early. He/she will also arrive home early and do the homework. When looking for a school, get one with a play ground even if not so big. Remove the mentality of competition. Encourage your child even if he/she does not do well in class. Let them know they can do better in other areas. This child has a long way to go in life. Hence the need to mold his/her brain positively. Republic of Kenya (1999).

School environment

According to William Hatsey & Christopher Morris, Environment is the surrounding in which a person, animal or plant lives. It can affect the growth of a person, animal or plant.

School environment is therefore the surrounding in which learners are exposed to during the teaching and learning process in a school.

Classroom Materials

Learners with require a variety of special classroom materials to succeed in day-to-day activities. The goal of material selection is to think about each student within your classroom and select materials that allow all students to succeed within the lesson you wish to teach.

Cultural diversity of pupils as a factor of school environment

Pupils come from many different cultural backgrounds, and you likely have a wide variety of diverse students within your classroom. It is important to accommodate these students in your behavior management plan. Students from other cultures may speak louder in everyday conversation or stay quieter during group activities. Encouraged is given to these pupils to participate respectfully and follow the classroom rules, but also take into consideration these cultural difference during behavior management(Charney 1992)

Preschool education (or infant education) is the provision of learning to children before the commencement of statutory and obligatory education, usually between the ages of zero and three or five, depending on the jurisdiction. In some places, such as the United States, preschool precedes Kindergarten and the normal primary school system. In others, including much of Europe, preschool and Kindergarten programs are the same early childhood education programs. Preschool programs may be part of or separate from child care services needed by working parents. They may be government-run programs or private ventures. Some countries provide significant subsidies to pay for the costs of the programs (Glassner 1984). In Kenya pre-school is entirely dependent on the parents, community and teachers. The government has not placed a hand on the pre-school section as yet.

According to Manani, curriculum rules, instruction, materials and environment should all be considered in determining potential classroom adaptations necessary for providing the functional skill needs of students with neuromuscular disorders. Factors to consider are:

- identifying the facilitators and barriers to performance
- identifying the child's learning preferences and behaviors
- determining whether modifications should apply to all students or only those with disorders
- continuous evaluation of the effectiveness of adaptations made
- utilization of knowledgeable health care professionals for support

Physical facilities

Because of the physical facilities prevalent in many communities, schools may provide one of the few opportunities that children with neuromuscular disorders have to interact with peers or adults outside of the home. However, to enable social opportunities for children within the school setting, it is often necessary to modify and adapt the school environment to make it accessible and safe for these children. Modifying the environment may include changing the physical layout and physical structure of the school in addition to providing special adaptive equipment.

Although schools often meet many of the needs for environmental adjustments, it is still common for these students to experience architectural barriers to accessibility created by a lack of ramps, elevators, and automatic doors. For the older child, environmental adjustments are more likely to go unmet. Typically, in later years children are more likely to have several different teachers who use different classrooms depending on the subject taught. This may result in having to transfer to a different floor or different building and needing to carry books and/or personal equipment that was previously maintained in a single classroom. Utilizing facilities results in additional

considerations, such as whether doorways are wide enough, desks and fountains are at wheelchair level, and privacy is provided for toileting needs. Teachers should be aware of these needs and how the appropriate adaptations may be made, so that the child's educational experience is as comfortable as possible (Stubbs 1994)

Ultimately, the child's ability to manage as independently as possible is the goal. However, environmental changes should be made that least compromise typical school experiences.

Curricular and instructional materials

According to Pascopella, Numerous materials are related to how activities are organized and conducted within the school. Students often have difficulties performing particular school activities in the manner expected, resulting in restricted participation or exclusion from some class and outdoor activities. However, these students can usually accomplish these activities, but not as quickly or with the same approach. In order to accommodate these students, rules concerning how to perform the activity (including the location, pace, and time-frame) must be altered. The literature abounds with information and ideas on curricular and instructional modification techniques and accommodation strategies. This information should be sought out and consulted in order to provide an optimal learning environment for these children.

Being able to identify and understand each child's functional abilities and limitations is important to successfully accommodate the child. Finally, concerns over liability issues associated with involving children with disabilities in classroom activities should be addressed, including safety considerations in the classroom, in the playground, in physical education classes, and on fieldtrips.

Learning adaptation

Learning is a lasting change in behaviour or mental processes that results from experiences. It can also be knowledge gained by careful study or practice.

Adaptation is to adjust to new conditions or surroundings.

Barnett, W. Steven, and Jason T. Hustedt. (2003): The role of adaptation, learning and optimization are becoming increasingly essential and intertwined. The capability of a system to adapt either through modification of its physiological structure or via some revalidation process of internal mechanisms that directly dictate the response or behavior is crucial in many real world applications. Optimization lies at the heart of most machine learning approaches while learning and optimization are two primary means to effect adaptation in various forms. They usually involve computational processes incorporated within the system that trigger parametric updating and knowledge or model enhancement, giving rise to progressive improvement.

Learning brings about a qualitative change in regard to adaptation, the most generic and simple form of optimization at an individual scale. It implies the idea of new knowledge, in the sense that the organism links what formerly appeared as an undistinguished whole. In other words, it means the capability to change its own codes of meaning.

Banks, James E. (2000). A supportive learning environment is created through the interaction of the indoor and outdoor physical environment, the instructional materials, furnishings, interpersonal relationships (adults with children, adults with adults and children with children) and daily routines. It is within this supportive environment that each child's optimal development takes place. The child's development in the four domains - social, physical, cognitive and emotional - is being supported, sustained, extended and enhanced primarily through activities which promote purposeful play. While the adults provide the conditions and the materials that influence how the child plays and extend the activity so that more sophisticated levels of interaction and expression are realized, it is the child who determines the roles and the rules shaping the play.

Theoretical perspective

The study will be based on Lev Vygotsky's Social Development Theory. Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934), is a Russian psychologist who lived during Russian Revolution. His work was published in 1962. And it asserts that, Social interaction plays a fundamental role in the process of cognitive development. In contrast to Jean Piaget's understanding of child development (in which development necessarily precedes learning), Vygotsky felt social learning precedes development. He states: "Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people (interpsychological) and then inside the child (intrapsychological).

Lev Vygotsky has contributed a wealth of ideas to early childhood education. Most important, he has shown us how children's efforts to understand the world around them, working in concert with teachers' sensitive, responsive interactions, rouses their young minds to life. Child development is the result of the interactions between children and their social environment. These interactions include those with parents and teachers, playmates and classmates, and brothers and sisters. They also involve relationships with significant objects, such as books or toys, and culturally specific practices that children engage in the classroom, at home, and on the playground. Children are active partners in these interactions, constructing knowledge, skills, and attitudes and not just mirroring the world around them.

According to Vygotsky, humans use tools that develop from a culture, such as speech and writing, to mediate their social environments. Initially children develop these tools to serve solely as social functions, ways to communicate needs. Vygotsky believed that the internalization of these tools led to higher thinking skills. Crawford, K. (1996) Vygotskian.

Related studies

School environment and learning adaptation

Allen, K. E. & Schwartz, I. S. (2000) Results have proven that early childhood education can be the correct choice for some children. There are many phenomenal early childhood learning programs around the country. These programs are sometimes called daycare. They are not, however, daycare facilities of old. Those facilities operated primarily as babysitting services. Today's early childhood offering focus on the learning process along with other important functions

Early childhood education has long been debated by varying opinions. Some feel that young children belong at home and separate from instruction. Others feel that the ages up to 5 years are the most important years of education. It has been said that this is the time period when the brain does the bulk of its growing. This could mean that the learning process should be introduced during these years.

Children in some cases will become much more advanced. This is apparent in children who have undergone some sort of early childhood program. This process is also known to teach and enforce important skills for the future. Verbal skills, communication skills, and coordination are taught through various techniques. Software programs designed for this age group have been used in homes and facilities around the country. Brickman, Nancy Altman (Ed.). (1996)

Nancy (1996) further asserts that, early childhood education provides kids with special skills. Children in these settings learn how to work well together, as a group or a team. This is particularly important for children without siblings at home. Goal setting is another topic that is taught through these learning programs. Children see the benefit of trying hard, focusing, and paying attention. Each of these will soon be crucial to future education years.

Preparation from early childhood education will follow these kids for years to come. When they are older students they will still be incorporating these skills with their learning process. The merits of learning in this way for these children are endless.

Another stark divide between early education and child care is relates to staff, their Qualifications and supply. The qualifications of staff in child care are diverse and generally lower than those in preschools and kindergartens. The push for standards-based teacher accreditation has had less impact in the child care arena than in the early education sector. Kenya continues to experience a shortage of both child care places and staff, despite considerable increases in government funding. It also faces considerable difficulty in raising the qualifications of staff and improving the conditions of employment for those employed in this sector. Allen, K. E. & Schwartz, I. S. (2000)

Cadwell, Louise B. & Candini, Lella (1997) they assert that, Administrators need to provide curriculum support, resources, materials and opportunities for staff to improve teaching practices. Preschool directors, principals, education supervisors and directors of special education will need to actively pursue and provide professional development activities and time for teachers to reflect on and refine practice. They will also actively engage themselves in the professional development activities.

Cohen Elizabeth (2000) Early child hood Teachers in Kenya are generally on poorly motivated people in terms of salaries, job description and specification, poor and inadequate working conditions and facilities. To be an enabling teacher, specific efforts and motivational structures need to be put in place to ensure that teachers are motivated. To have a ration of 1:50 and expect such a teacher to be individual learner sensitive not only defies logic but human capacity.

He adds that Lack of learning facilities and materials as most schools are crowded and teachers overworked. It is a struggle for the fittest and of the challenged is disadvantaged.

Childhood care and education is not universally provided by government. Almost all childcare centers are privately operated, either by not-for-profit community groups or by for-profit commercial businesses. There are no public early childhood services of any type. Charney, Ruth S. (1992).

Curriculum being a key area in all sub-sectors, Abagi O. (1999) asserts that, there will be a need to harmonize the curriculum so that, there are no parallel programmes that is, One offering the 8-4-4 system and another for foreign based education systems. Modalities can be developed for continuous review of the curricular to make the education system relevant, cost effective, gender sensitive and of high quality. Kenya will strengthen her position in the regional programmes and Monitoring Learning Achievements and Quality at all levels of the education system.

Summary

According to the various researchers, the various theories emphasize that a child is developmental and every function in a child is developmental and essential to a child's development. All scholars have argued around this aspect of social development. However, learning adaptations and environment can be influenced by a number of factors other than the social settings of a child.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed the descriptive approach design with co-relational study. The study employed a qualitative angle. The descriptive survey research was used because the study intended to select respondents across different schools with purpose of soliciting for their opinions and analyzing them for comparison. The study co-relates school environment and learning adaptations of pre-scholars.

Research Population

The target population involved children and teachers from pre schools in Masinga District. Out of 100 schools only 20 were selected for proximity. Only teachers and pre-scholars were contacted for the study.

Sample Size

A sample involved early child hood teachers and early education centers, target population and sample size. The Sloven's formula is used to determine the minimum sample size with the approximated total population size as 1000.

$$S = P / 1 + P(0.05)$$

$$P = 100$$

$$S = 100 / 1 + 100(0.05)^2$$

$$S = 100 + 100(5/100)^2$$

$$S = 100.25$$

$$\text{Sample size} = 100$$

Sampling Procedures

The purposive sampling was utilized to select the respondents based on these criteria:

- i. Male or female respondents in any of the pre schools included in the study

- ii. Teaching staff with teaching experience ranging from one year and above
- iii. Head teachers of pre schools under study from the list of qualified respondents chosen based on the inclusion criteria,
- iv. The systematic random sampling will be used to finally select the respondents with consideration to the computed minimum sample size.

Research Instruments

Questionnaire

Self administered questionnaires were used as the major instruments to collect data from primary and pre-school teachers in Masinga District. In this study, SAQs were filled in by the selected teachers in the district. The researcher used SAQs because they are most appropriate in a survey that involves a large number of respondents. Open and closed questionnaires were used for the literate respondents.

Observation as a method was used to identify certain issues.

Validity of the Instruments

Instruments were tested to with a pilot study to prove how valid and reliable they are.

After constructing the questionnaire, the researcher conducted the supervisor and two other experts. This enabled the researcher to establish the validity of the instruments by the use of expert judgment. Some of the items that was recommended from removal were removed. The researcher made appropriate adjustments until the instruments were declared valid.

Reliability of instruments

The reliability of a questionnaire is the consistency with which respondents interpret and respond to all questions.

This activity was carried out as required.

Data Gathering Procedures

Before the administration of the questionnaires

An introduction letter was obtained from the School of Post Graduate Studies and Research for the researcher to solicit approval to conduct the study from respective heads of secondary schools.

When approved, the researcher secured a list of the qualified respondents from the school authorities in charge and select through systematic random sampling from this list to arrive at the minimum sample size.

Select research assistants who would assist in the data collection; brief and orient them in order to be consistent in administering the questionnaires.

During the administration of the questionnaires

The respondents were requested to answer completely and not to leave any part of the questionnaires unanswered.

The researcher and assistants emphasized retrieval of the questionnaires within five days from the date of distribution.

On retrieval, all returned questionnaires were checked if all are answered.

After the administration of the questionnaires

The data gathered was collected, encoded into the computer and statistically treated using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

Data Analysis

Data was analyzed using frequency tables.

Ethical Considerations

To ensure confidentiality of the information provided by the respondents and to ascertain the practice of ethics in this study, the following activities were implemented by the researcher:

Seek permission to adopt the standardized questionnaire on school effectiveness through a written communication to the author.

The respondents and schools will be coded instead of reflecting the names.

Solicit permission through a written request to the concerned officials of the secondary schools included in the study.

Request the respondents to sign in the *Informed Consent Form* (Appendix 3)

Acknowledge the authors quoted in this study and the author of the standardized instrument through citations and referencing.

Present the findings in a generalized manner.

Limitations of the Study

The study was limited by distances between one institution to another.

Some questions were not well understood by the respondents so the researcher took time to explain them.

Some respondents were not willing to provide data so the researcher had to plead with them.

Unpredicted bad weather, the researcher was compelled to change time and budget frame.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

The chapter entails the different findings from the survey and presentations of the data. Data was analyzed using frequency tables computed.

Table 1: Profile of respondents

Categories		Frequency	Percent
Age of respondent	36-44	45	37.5
	45-54	71	59.2
	54 and above	3	2.5
	22	1	.8
	Total	120	100.0
Sex	Female	75	62.5
	Male	45	37.5
	Total	120	100.0
Level of education	Certificate	13	10.8
	Diploma	52	43.3
	Bachelors	55	45.8
	Total	120	100.0
Marital status	Single	46	38.3
	married	74	61.7
	Total	120	100.0
Experience in teaching	less than 5 years	82	68.3
	6-10	28	23.3
	11-15	9	7.5
	5	1	.8
	Total	120	100.0

Source: Field data 2012

The above table shows the majority of respondents are between 45 and 54 years of age, the least are of the age less than 54 years. The other respondents are between 36-34 years of age. This implies that the teachers are old enough for the pre-scholars.

The findings also show that female teachers in preschool are more than the male respondents. This implies that there is gender imbalance among pre-scholar teachers and there should be gender balance among the teachers in pre-school.

The findings also shows that the highest levels of education among respondents are those that have bachelors. This implies that there is need to improve on their levels of education and upgrade because the 50% have diplomas while the least number has certificates.

As far as marital status is concerned, those who are married are more than those that are single. This implies that the majority of respondents are able to handle children in pre-school.

The majority of teachers have less than five years, while the rest are between the age of 6-10 years, the rest are between 11-15 years and least experience have taught for less than five years.

Table 2: School environment

	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
Classroom and classroom materials	2.15	High	1
Cultural environment	2.48	Very high	2
Physical environment	2.36	High	3
Curriculum and instructional materials	3.36	Very high	4
Average	2.59		

Source: fieldwork 2012

The above table shows that the majority of respondents agree that class room and classroom materials are enough for the learners, followed by classrooms built well and then classrooms being conducive for the learners. That means that the biggest problem the classes being conducive for the learners.

The mean of classroom and classroom materials is 2.15, while the mean for cultural environment is 2.48, physical environment is 2.36 and curriculum and instructional materials have a mean of 3.366. Curriculum and Instructional materials are the most needed facilities in the school environment.

Table 3: Level of adaptation

	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
Social adaptations	2.65	Very High	5
Physical adaptations	1.98	Low	6
Cognitive adaptations	2.52	Very high	7
Emotional adaptations	2.50	Very high	8
Average	2.41		

Source: Field work 2012

The above table above shows that the means of the level of adaptations, the physical environment has the lowest ,mean implying that the respondents are affected by the physical adaptations while, social adaptations, cognitive adaptations.

The findings show that the majority of respondents agree that school buildings are spacious enough for pre-scholars while others agree that school buildings are well built, buildings are safe and the rest agree that the pre-scholars have enough furniture.

The above table shows that the majority of respondents agree that curriculum is rich and well built, it's meant to develop the child, and the findings also show that the teachers are enough for teaching the pre-scholars. This implies that the learners are adapting to the learning because of the good curriculum.

The findings also show that children enjoy learning using teaching aids as a social adjustment. They enjoy best interacting with others, they have play as part of learning while the least respondents agree that children adapt to learning easily.

This all implies that the children's' social adjustments are good especially in the areas of adjusting to other children.

According the findings the majority of the respondents agree that the teachers have a safe and conducive environment for children while teachers can also adjust to routine of formal education and the least respondents agree that teachers have enough learning and teaching aids for children.

According to the findings, the majority of respondents agree that the curriculum is rich and well built, the rest agree that curriculum aims at developing a child, the teachers are enough for curriculum, others agree that space is enough for instructional materials. The least respondents agree that the pre-scholars have suitable curriculum for instructors.

Children interact well with others and children enjoy learning with teaching aids, while others have play as part of learning and children adapt to learning easily. The sequence is in that order. This implies that social adjustment should emphasize being with other students. Teachers should emphasize social workings with others.

The above table shows that the respondents agree that teachers have safe and conducive atmosphere for children while teachers help children adjust to routine of formal education and teachers enough teaching aids to children.

The findings shows that the majority of respondents agree that children are at different stages of growth and development; children give feedback and teacher's help children learn through senses the respondents agree to that. The least respondents agree that children's' learning and achievement are related to the learning environment.

The majority of respondents /children have caring and competent adults in school, children have appraisals by teachers and children have safe nurturing and stimulating environment and the least of respondents cater for learners individual differences.

The school environment was rated in terms of classroom materials, cultural environment, physical environment, curriculum and instructional materials. The difference between all the aspects of school environment is very minimal. This implies that the respondents have a problem of instructional and curriculum materials as the biggest problem.

The mean shows that the difference between the different learning adaptations is very minimal and this implies that the respondents are agree that all adaptations are important to the learners.

Relationship between school environment and learning adaptation

The third objective of the study was to establish the relationship between school environment and learning adaptations. The table 4 shows the details of the school environment and learning adaptations.

Table 4: Relationship between school environment and learning adaptation

Variables	Mean	r	Sig	Interpretation	Decision
School environment	2.59	0.01	0.282	Significant	Rejected
Learning adaptation	2.57				

Source: field data 2012

According to the table above, the mean of classroom and class room materials is very low. This implies that there is no significant relationship between class room and class room materials as far as adaptations of the pupils are concerned. This implies that the null hypothesis is rejected.

The above shows that the grand mean between school environment and learning adaptations is almost the same. The difference in the mean is a small difference along the adaptations. The correlation implies that school environment directly influences learning adaptations among pre-scholars.

CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AREAS OF FURTHER
RESEARCH AND CONCLUSIONS

Major findings

Profile

According to the findings shows that female teachers in preschool are more than the male respondents. this implies that there is gender imbalance among pre-scholar teachers and there should be gender balance among the teachers in pre-school.

The majority of respondents are between 45 and 54 years of age, the least are of the age less than 54 years. The other respondents are between 36-34 years of age. This implies that the teachers are old enough for the pre-scholars.

Shows that the highest levels, of education among respondents are those that have bachelors. This implies that there is need to improve on their levels of education and upgrade because the 50% have diplomas while the least number has certificates.

The table shows that those who are married are more than those that are single. This implies that the majority of respondents are able to handle children in pre-school.

The highest levels of education among respondents are those that have bachelors. This implies that there is need to improve on their levels of education and upgrade because the 50% have diplomas while the least number has certificates.

Level of conduciveness of school environment

The majority of teachers have less than five years, while the rest are between the age of 6-10 years, the rest are between 11-15 years and least experience have taught for less than five years.

The majority of respondents agree that class room and classroom materials are enough for the learners, followed by classrooms built well and then classrooms being conducive

for the learners. That means that the biggest problem the classes being conducive for the learners.

that the cultural environment is normal all through; the majority of respondents agree that cultural activities are done in school, while the rest agree that there is diversity while teaching, no barriers to learners culture and they also agree that there is dress code according to culture.

The majority of respondents agree that school buildings are spacious enough for pre-scholars while others agree that school buildings are well built, buildings are safe and the rest agree that the pre-scholars have enough furniture.

Level of learning adaptation

Findings also show that children enjoy learning using teaching aids as a social adjustment. They enjoy best interacting with others, they have play as part of learning while the least respondents agree that children adapt to learning easily.

This all implies that the children's' social adjustments are good especially in the areas of adjusting to other children.

The majority of respondents agree that the curriculum is rich and well built, the rest agree that curriculum aims at developing a child, the teachers are enough for curriculum, others agree that space is enough for instructional materials. The least respondents agree that the pre-scholars have suitable curriculum for instructors.

The findings that the respondents agree that teachers have safe and conducive atmosphere for children while teachers help children adjust to routine of formal education and teachers enough teaching aids to children.

The majority of respondents agree that children are at different stages of growth and development, children give feedback and teacher's help children learn through senses 24% of the respondents agree to that. The least respondents agree that children's' learning and achievement are related to the learning environment.

Majority of respondents /children have caring and competent adults in school, children have appraisals by teachers and children have safe nurturing and stimulating environment and the least of respondents cater for learners' individual differences.

Recommendations

There is need to improve on school environment by stake holders so as to help learners adopt accordingly. School environment can be improved through better services for the children so as to make it very attractive for the learners.

There is also need for teachers to be trained in early childhood learning especially those that have diplomas and certificates. There is need for them to be better in their childhood learning, through refresher courses both in school and outside school.

There is need for teachers to be creative in their teaching and use attractive and better instructional materials for children. The pre-scholars should get better teachings for through better pictorials and from easy learning materials.

Teachers and instructors of pre-school should emphasis more social interactions for pre-scholars

Government should give attention to pre-school department so as to make it up to date and have a better environment for learners to adapt to.

Areas of further research

An area of further research should also be on the extent of social interaction of pre-scholars

There is need to investigate on the levels of social adjustments of pre-scholars at school and at home.

A survey should be made on the influence of physical infrastructure on the pre-scholar adaptations to learning.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Lev Vygotsky's theory of social development was conclusively related to the study. The theory emphasizes the culture contribution to child's social development. Child's social development is a result of interaction between children and other children, teachers, parents (Social Environment). The study found out that culture is one of those aspects that affect a child's development and finally adaptation.

It was discovered that, most ECDC are owned by parents and the community therefore they do not have enough money to inject into the schools therefore they have poor services and therefore poor learning adaptations.

Based on the purpose of the study, the researcher concludes that school environment highly influences the learning adaptations of pre-scholars. School environment, ranging from the teachers, the social atmosphere, physical facilities. They all influence the learning adaptations of pre-scholars. There is a significant relationship between the level of conduciveness of school environment and learning adaptation.

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APPENDIX 1 A
TRANSMITTAL LETTER

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY VICE CHANCELLOR (DVC)
COLLEGE OF HIGHER DEGREES AND RESEARCH (CHDR)

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: INTRODUCTION LETTER FOR MS. DOMITILA M MUOLA

The above mentioned candidate is a bonafide student of Kampala International University pursuing a Master's degree in Early Childhood and Primary Education.

She is currently conducting a field research for her dissertation entitled, Early education and learning adaptation of pre scholars in selected pre schools of Masinga District, Kenya

Your institution has been identified as a valuable source of information pertaining to her research project. The purpose of this letter then is to request you to avail her with the pertinent information she may need.

Any data shared with her will be used for academic purposes only and shall be kept with utmost confidentiality.

Any assistance rendered to her will be highly appreciated.

Yours truly,

NOVEMBRIETA R. SUMIL, PH.D.

Deputy Vice Chancellor, SPGSR

APPENDIX 1B
TRANSMITTAL LETTER FOR THE RESPONDENTS

Dear Sir/ Madam,

Greetings!

I am Domitila M. Muola, a student of Kampala International University studying a master's degree in Early Childhood and Primary Education. This questionnaire has been prepared for data collection concerning "Early education and Learning adaptation of pre Scholars in selected pre schools of Masinga district, Kenya". The purpose of the questionnaire is only for academic reasons and the information you provide shall be treated with a lot of confidentiality. I kindly request you to answer the questions fully and honestly.

May I retrieve the questionnaire within five days (5)?

Thank you very much in advance.

Yours faithfully,

Domitila M. Muola

APPENDIX II
CLEARANCE FROM ETHICS COMMITTEE

Date _____

Candidate's Data

Name _____

Reg.# _____

Course _____

Title of Study _____

Ethical Review Checklist

The study reviewed considered the following:

- Physical Safety of Human Subjects
- Psychological Safety
- Emotional Security
- Privacy
- Written Request for Author of Standardized Instrument
- Coding of Questionnaires/Anonymity/Confidentiality
- Permission to Conduct the Study
- Informed Consent
- Citations/Authors Recognized

Results of Ethical Review

___ Approved

___ Conditional (to provide the Ethics Committee with corrections)

___ Disapproved/ Resubmit Proposal

Ethics Committee (Name and Signature)

Chairperson _____

Members _____

APPENDIX III

INFORMED CONSENT

I am giving my consent to be part of the research study of Ms. Domitila M. Muola that will focus on Counseling Competence and code of ethics.

I shall be assured of privacy and confidentiality and I will be given the option to refuse participation or withdraw my participation at any time.

I have been informed that the research is voluntary and that the results that will be given to me if I request for it.

Initials:

Date:

APPENDIX 1VA

Headteacher's/ Deputies/ Pre-school teachers

Dear respondent,

You have been selected to participate in the study entitled **Early Childhood Environment and Learning Adaptation in Selected Pre-Schools in Masinga District** which is being taken as part of educational research in partial fulfillment of the award of Master of Education in Early Childhood and Primary Education.

Your corporation in administering the instrument will be highly appreciated.

Thank you,

Domitila

SECTION A: FACE – SHEET

In this section, you are kindly requested to tick () that alternative response that fits your opinion as a teacher.

(a) Your age group

_____ Less than 35

_____ 36-44 years

_____ 45-54

_____ 54 plus

(b) Sex of respondent

_____ Male

_____ Female

(c) Your marital status

_____ Single

_____ Married

_____ Divorced

_____ Other

(d) Your highest level of education

_____ Certificate

_____ Diploma

_____ Bachelors

_____ Masters

_____ PhD

_____ Others

(e) Length of service as a teacher

_____ Less than 5 years

_____ 6-10 years

_____ 11-15

_____ 15 plus

APPENDIX IV B
QUESTIONNAIRE ON ENVIRONMENT

Direction 1. Please write preferred option on the space provided before each item using the rating guide below.

Response mode	Rating	Description
Very adequate	4	you agree with some doubt
Adequate	3	you agree with no doubt at all
Inadequate	2	you disagree with some doubt
Unavailable	1	you disagree with no doubt at all

SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

a) Classroom and classroom materials.

- 1 _____ the preschoolers have enough and conducive classrooms for the learners.
- 2 _____ pre-scholar classrooms are well built to suit the learner's needs.
- 3 _____ pre-scholar have enough learning material.
- 4 _____ the classrooms are well planned for the learners.
- 5 _____ classroom furniture caters for all types of learners.
- 6 _____ the classrooms are spacious and well ventilated

b) Cultural environment

- 7 _____ dressing code is according to culture
- 8 _____ culture activities are done in school
- 9 _____ cultural diversity of learners are considered while teaching
- 10 _____ there are no barriers to learners culture

c) Physical facilities

- 11 _____ the preschool buildings are well built and conducive.

- 12 _____ the school buildings are spacious enough for the pre scholars.
- 13 _____ the school buildings have enough light and are well ventilated.
- 14 _____ the school buildings have enough furniture for the pre scholar.
- 15 _____ the school building have lockable doors for safety and of learners work.

d) Curriculum and instructional materials

- 16 _____ the preschoolers have reliable curriculum from the instructors.
- 17 _____ spaces is enough to place instructional material
- 18 _____ the curriculum is rich and well built
- 19 _____ they are enough teachers for curriculum
- 20 _____ the instructional materials are well built for the pre scholars.
- 21 _____ instructional materials are enough for learners
- 22 _____ the curriculum is child centered.
- 23 _____ the curriculum is aimed at all round development of a child.

PRESCHOOL TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRES

Dear respondent,

You have been selected to participate in the study entitled **Early childhood Education; School Environment and learning adaptation in selected preschools in Masinga District**. Which is being undertaken as part of educational research in partial fulfillment of the award of master of education in early childhood and primary education

Your corporation in administering the instrument will be highly appreciated.

Thank you,

Domitila

SECTION A: FACE – SHEET

In this section, you are kindly requested to tick () that alternative response that fits your opinion as a teacher.

(a) Your age group

_____ Less than 35

_____ 36-44 years

_____ 45-54

_____ 54 plus

(b) Sex of respondent

_____ Male

_____ Female

(c) Your marital status

_____ Single

_____ Married

_____ Divorced

_____ Other

(d) Your highest level of education

_____ Certificate

_____ Diploma

_____ Bachelors

_____ Masters

_____ PhD

_____ Others

(e) Length of service as a teacher

_____ Less than 5 years

_____ 6-10 years

_____ 11-15

_____ 15 plus

APPENDIX IV C

QUESTIONNAIRE ON LEARNING ADAPTATION

Direction 1: please write preferred option on space provided between each item.

Kindly use the rating guide below.

Response mode	Rating	Description
Agree	4	you agree with some doubt
Strongly agree	3	you agree with no doubt at all
Disagree	2	you disagree with some doubt
Strongly	1	you disagree with no doubt at all

LEARNING ADAPTATION

a) Social adaptation

- 1 _____ children adapt to the environment of learning easily
- 2 _____ children enjoy the teaching aids used by the teachers
- 3 _____ children interact well with others
- 4 _____ children have play as part of their learning
- 5 _____ children enjoy the teaching methods used by the teachers

b) Physical adaptation

- 6 _____ teachers provide enough teaching and learning aids to the children
- 7 _____ teachers have a safe and clean atmosphere for their children
- 8 _____ teachers help children adjust to the routine of formal education

c) Cognitive adaptation

- 9 _____ children's performance and achievements are related to the learning adaptations
- 10 _____ teachers understand the different stages of growth and development
- 11 _____ teachers regularly check children's work and give them feedback
- 12 _____ teachers help children learn through their senses

d) Emotional adaptation

- 13 _____ teachers cater for their learners' individual differences
- 14 _____ children are given appraisals by the teachers
- 15 _____ children have a competent and caring adult in school.
- 16 _____ children have a safe, nurturing and stimulating environment

APPENDIX V
PROPOSED DATA PRESENTATION THROUGH TABLES

Table 2

Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male		
Female		
Age		
Less than 35		
36-44		
45- 54		
54 plus		
Educational levels (Under Education Discipline)		
Certificate		
Diploma		
Bachelors		
PhD		
Others		
Marital Status		
Single		
Married		
Length of service as a teacher		
Less than 5 years		
6-10 years		
11-15 years		
15 plus		

APPENDIX A

TIME FRAME

	TIME IN MONTHS							
	FEB- MAY	MAY	MAY- JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV
Proposal writing								
Proposal defense								
Making corrections								
Data collection								
Data editing								
Categorization and entry								
Data analysis								
Report writing								
Report viva/defending								
Making corrections and submission of dissertation								

APPENDIX B

PROPOSED BUDGET

Particular	Quantity	Amount in Kenyan shillings
Stationary	Paper 3 Reams	2,100Ksh
	Ink 1 Cartridge	1400Ksh
	Binding materials 5	4000Ksh
Research Assistants	3 @ 4000	12000Ksh
Transport costs		8000Ksh
Data Analysis		16000
Up keep		8000Ksh
Miscellaneous		4000Ksh
	Total	51,300ksh

RESEARCHER'S CURRICULUM VITAE

To document the details of the researcher, her competency in writing a research and to recognize her efforts and qualifications, this part of the research report is thus meant

Personal Profile

NAME : Domitila M. Muola
GENDER : Female
NATIONALITY : Kenyan
ADDRESS : Po box 63, Ekalakala

Educational Background

BACHELOR OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION _ Kampala International
University
P1 CERTIFICATE _ Kericho Teachers Training College
KCE CERTIFICATE _ Mitaboni Girls Secondary School

Work Experiences

Ekalakala primary school 1995-to date (Deputy Head teacher)
Kenyatta primary school 1989-1995 (senior teacher)

