

**An examination on child protection as a basis for enhancing early childhood education
of sexually abused children in Kinangop Sub-County, Kenya**

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Abstract

All children are entitled to a basic right to education as enshrined in Basic Education Act, 2012. However, realization of such rights has faced numerous challenges though little has been done to establish the influence of child sexual abuse. Thus, this study aimed to examine child protection as a basis for enhancing early childhood education of sexually abused children in Kinangop Sub-county. This study was guided by The Attachment Theory which was postulated by Bowlby (1990). The study adopted mixed methods approach and a descriptive survey. Target population comprised the 53 ECDE Center managers, 146 ECDE Teachers, 106 parents' representatives, five Children's officers and 1190 ECDE Children all totaling to 1500. The researcher sampled 20% of the targeted ECDE Centers, that is, ten ECDE Centers. Similarly, based on the same proportion, 20% of the target population, that is, 300 respondents were sampled. Stratified sampling was applied to create five strata based on the number of zones in Kinangop Sub-county. From each stratum, two ECDE Center managers and nine ECDE Teachers were selected using purposive sampling. The Children's Officers were also selected using purposive sampling. Six parents' representatives and 43 ECDE children were selected using simple random sampling. Qualitative data was analyzed based on research objectives while quantitative data was analyzed using ANOVA in Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS Version 21). The study established that applicability of child protection amongst sexually abused children has not been fully realized. The study thus recommends that stakeholders should be trained on different child protection measures so that they can be able to identify and prevent cases or potential instances of child sexual abuse (CSA).

Keywords: Child Protection, Sexually Abused, Early Childhood Learners

1.0 Introduction

The objective of the study was to examine child protection as a basis for enhancing early childhood education of sexually abused children in Kinangop Sub-county. The null hypothesis of the study was; there is no significant difference between child protection and early childhood education of sexually abused children in Kinangop Sub-county.

1.1 Background of the Study

Children's Rights to Education (or children's human Rights to Education) is the teaching and practice of children's rights in schools and educational institutions, as informed by and consistent with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Detrick, 2000). When fully implemented, a children's Rights to Education program consists of both a curriculum to teach children their human rights, and framework to operate the school in a manner that respects children's rights. Articles 29 and 42 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child require children to be educated about their rights (Wallberg & Kahn, 2011).

1.2 Context and review of literature

1.2.1 Child Protection and Education of Sexually Abused Children

According to Broadhurst (2000), children spend the majority of their waking hours in school and parents place their trust in school staff giving them the primary responsibility for assisting their children to develop to their full potential. The vast majority of teachers and other school staff work tirelessly to ensure the education of future generations (Broadhurst, 2000). There are, however, a select few who use the power inherent in their role to abuse that trust and to target vulnerable children and young people for sexual abuse. In a longitudinal study conducted in the Netherlands, Brosig & Kalichman (2002) posited that most schools, colleges and academies provide a safe environment for the education of children and young where there are professional relationships based on care, respect and trust. Brosig & Kalichman (2002) further posited that, for many teachers and other school staff, promoting the social and emotional development of children is a critical and central aspect of their role and there is no doubt that many who work in education have a profound effect on the lives of their pupils.

Conversely, the power imbalance present in this influential relationship may be abused, resulting in long-term trauma for the preschool pupil (Camblin & Prout, 2003). This is

particularly the case for some sex offenders who use their role in educating children and young people to target and abuse victims. Thus, if there is need to prevent sexual abuse by teachers, other school staff and those who hold positions of trust in education, it is important to gain a better understanding of what grooming behavior look in the context of those working in schools, academies and colleges. It is therefore of critical importance that those involved in education have a greater understanding how these adults groom and entrap their pupils. In another study conducted in Australia, Finlayson & Koocher (2001) asserted that this understanding will assist schools to develop and enforce effective safeguarding policies and engage in safe practices to prevent abusive behavior from occurring and deal more appropriately with concerning behaviors when they are identified so as to enhance education of the sexually abused children. Responsibilities of schools, academies and colleges. A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children Australian Education Act (2006) sets out the duty of schools and colleges in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils under section 175 of the Act. The same duty applies to independent schools, academies and free schools under section 157 of the same Act. The 2006 DCSF guidance "Safeguarding children and safer recruitment in education" Annex A reinforces that: 'Under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 it is an offence for a person over 18 such as teacher and youth worker to have a sexual relationship with a child under 18 where that person is in a position of trust in respect of that child, even if the relationship is consensual. This applies where the child is in full-time education and the person works in the same establishment as the child, even if s/he does not teach the child.

Consistent with these assertions, Slavenas (2008) indicated that creating a culture that enables concerns about safeguarding and child protection to be expressed and addressed may include whistle blowing procedures. Clear expectations of staff behavior should be set out in a code of conduct. In most countries in Sub-Saharan Africa such as Morocco, Nigeria, South Africa and Kenya, Volpe (2001) posit that, in creating a safe environment and culture in the school, schools should be aware of the critical importance of promoting the emotional health and wellbeing of children and young people if they are to achieve their potential rather than focus exclusively on attainment. It is therefore essential to create a safe environment in your school for whole school staff and pupils. Volpe (2001) further indicated that a culture of openness and transparency should be promoted which in turn encourages vigilance and a sense of shared responsibility for the safeguarding of pupils to enable them progress well

in education. In South Africa, Turbett & O'Toole (2003) asserted that this culture promotes listening and open communication whereby pupils, parents/carers and all staff, irrespective of their role are facilitated to communicate about worries, are listened to and their concerns are taken seriously. Turbett & O'Toole (2003) asserted that contact names and numbers for internal and external support services should be made available to ensure that pupils and their families know who they can talk to if they are worried. In other words, those who work in schools should be assured that they can share any concerns about the conduct of colleagues and that these will be received in a sensitive manner.

In Kenya, to create a positive and safe environment for children in school, most institutions have clear guidelines or a code of conduct for all those involved: staff, volunteers, pupils and parents/carers (Ministry of Education, 2013). It is essential that everyone involved in the school community knows what behaviour is acceptable and what is not. Mwangi, Peterson & Munene (2009) posit that when expectations are clear, individuals who are not adhering to this standard of practice can be challenged. It is important that schools have procedures in place for dealing with child protection concerns, disclosures or allegations in order to support staff/volunteers, young people and parents through the process of reporting any concerns.

In a longitudinal study conducted in Nakuru West District, Korir (2010) asserted that it is essential for schools to keep accurate records of all incidents and concerns arising in relation to members of staff or volunteers. Korir (2010) indicated that the significance of each seemingly small piece of information is only appreciated when all the information is considered and patterns of behavior are detected. Whole school staff, volunteers and parents must be made aware of the appropriate avenues for pursuing complaints when they are unsatisfied with the internal response to their concern. All sections of the school community need to be made aware, in an appropriate way, of the policy and procedures and their responsibilities. Korir (2010) indicated that paramount is the understanding that the protection and welfare of the child is the priority and that any concern about the behavior of a member of staff or other adult working in school must be reported immediately. This should be embedded in the curriculum and ethos in the school. In Kinangop Sub-county, schools have made effective use of opportunities in the curriculum to help children and young people understand what constitutes sexual abuse and to raise awareness of behaviors that are of concern or unacceptable and teach children and parents how to seek help appropriately. Consistent with these assertions, schools have not avoided the potentially sensitive area of

sexual abuse as research indicates that there are gaps in children's knowledge with regard to keeping themselves safe from sexual abuse. Prevention education should include a comprehensive e-safety education programme for everyone in the school. However, Mwangi et al (2009) and Korir (2010) have not indicated how child protection translates into quality education for sexually abused learners; a research gap which this study sought to address.

1.3 Methodology

Mixed methods approach was applied, that is, both quantitative and qualitative methods. This study employed a descriptive survey design. Kothari (2005) noted that descriptive survey research is intended to produce statistical information about aspects of education that interest policy makers and educators. The researcher applied stratified sampling to create five strata based on the number of zones in Kinangop Sub-county. Purposive sampling was appropriate due to the fact that the sampled respondents hold positions which make them responsible as implementers of policies. This sampling procedure enabled the researcher to realize a sample of 10 ECDE Center managers, 44 ECDE Teachers, 2 Children's Officers, 32 parents' representatives and 212 ECDE Children. Qualitative data was analyzed based on themes whereas quantitative data was analyzed inferentially using One-Way ANOVA in Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS Version 21).

1.4 Research Findings and Discussion

As per research question two, the study intended to find out how children protection enhances applicability of rights to education of sexually abused children. Data was collected from ECDE Center Managers and ECDE teachers, organized and summarized and results were as indicated in Table 1;

Table 1: ECDE Center Managers' and ECDE Teachers' Views on Child Protection and Education of Sexually Abused Children

Test Items	REP	Ratings				
		SA %	A %	U %	D %	SD %
Provision of safe learning conditions guarantees sexually abused children accessibility to education, enrolment rates and academic performance	ECDECM	80.4	8.4	1.7	5.3	4.2
	ECDET	88.3	5.4	1.9	2.3	2.1
Adherence to child protection regulations in ECDE Centers guarantees sexually abused children accessibility to education, enrolment rates and performance	ECDECM	78.7	14.7	2.4	3.1	1.1
	ECDET	77.2	13.3	1.5	6.3	1.7
Awareness training for early childhood learners guarantees sexually abused children accessibility to education, enrolment rates and performance	ECDECM	69.7	12.1	2.1	10.3	5.8
	ECDET	75.3	20.1	1.4	1.3	1.9
ECDE centers with perimeter walls and strong gates guarantee sexually abused children accessibility to education, enrolment rates and performance	ECDECM	74.9	17.3	2.6	3.4	1.8
	ECDET	59.9	27.4	3.3	5.7	3.7
Escorting children to and from school guarantees sexually abused children accessibility to education, enrolment rates and academic performance	ECDECM	69.7	12.1	2.1	10.3	5.8
	ECDET	75.3	20.1	1.4	1.3	1.9

Key: ECDECM-ECDE Center Managers; ECDET-ECDE Teachers

The data on the Table 1 reveals that majority (80.4%ECDECM; 88.3%ECDET) of the sampled ECDE Center Managers and ECDE teachers strongly agreed with the view that provision of safe learning conditions guarantees sexually abused children accessibility to education, enrolment rates and academic performance as did 8.4%ECDECM and 5.4%ECDET who agreed. However, only a paltry 1.7% of the sampled ECDE Center Managers as well as 1.9% of ECDE teachers were undecided, 5.3% of ECDE Center

Managers as did 2.3% of the ECDE teachers disagreed whereas 4.2% of ECDE Center Managers and 2.1% of the ECDE teachers strongly disagreed. These findings corroborate the findings of a longitudinal study conducted in the Netherlands in which Brosig & Kalichman (2002) posited that most schools, colleges and academies provide a safe environment for the education of children and young adults where there are professional relationships based on care, respect and trust.

Brosig & Kalichman (2002) further posited that, for many teachers and other school staff, promoting the social and emotional development of children is a critical and central aspect of their role and there is no doubt that many who work in education have a profound effect on the lives of their pupils. These findings further support the assertions of Volpe (2001) that, in Sub-Saharan Africa, in creating a safe environment and culture in the school, schools should be aware of the critical importance of promoting the emotional health and wellbeing of children and young people if they are to achieve their potential rather than focus exclusively on attainment. It is therefore essential to create a safe environment in your school for whole school staff and pupils.

At the same time, the study revealed that majority of the respondents (78.7% ECDECM and 77.2% ECDET) strongly agreed with the view that adherence to child protection regulations in ECDE Centers guarantees sexually abused children accessibility to education, enrolment rates and performance. 14.7% of the ECDE Center Managers as did 13.3% of the sampled ECDE teachers agreed. However, 2.4% of ECDE Center Managers and 1.5% of the ECDE teachers were undecided, 3.1% of ECDE Center Managers and 6.3% of the ECDE teachers disagreed whereas 1.1% of the sampled preschool ECDE Center Managers as did 1.7% of the ECDE teachers strongly disagreed. These findings lend credence to the findings of the Ministry of Education (2013) which revealed that in Kenya, to create a positive and safe environment for children in school, most institutions have clear guidelines or a code of conduct for all those involved: staff, volunteers, pupils and parents. It is essential that everyone involved in the school community knows what behaviour is acceptable and what is not.

The findings also support the assertions by Mwangi, Peterson & Munene (2009) who posited that when expectations are clear, individuals who are not adhering to this standard of practice can be challenged. In other words, it is important that schools have procedures in place for dealing with child protection concerns, disclosures or allegations in order to support

staff/volunteers, young people and parents through the process of reporting any concerns. The study also revealed that majority of the respondents (69.7%ECDECM and 75.3%ECDET) strongly agreed with the view that awareness training for early childhood learners guarantees sexually abused children accessibility to education, enrolment rates and performance. 12.1% of the ECDE Center Managers as did 20.1% of the sampled ECDE teachers agreed. However, 2.1% of ECDE Center Managers and 1.4% of the ECDE teachers were undecided, 10.3% of ECDE Center Managers and 1.3% of the ECDE teachers disagreed whereas 5.8% of the sampled ECDE Center Managers as did 1.9% of the ECDE teachers strongly disagreed.

These findings were consistent with the findings of a longitudinal study conducted in Nakuru West District in which Korir (2010) asserted that whole school staff, volunteers and parents must be made aware of the appropriate avenues for pursuing complaints when they are unsatisfied with the internal response to their concern. All sections of the school community need to be made aware, in an appropriate way, of the policy and procedures and their responsibilities. Korir (2010) indicated that paramount is the understanding that the protection and welfare of the child is the priority and that any concern about the behavior of a member of staff or other adult working in school must be reported immediately. That is, this should be embedded in the curriculum and ethos in the school.

In the same vein, majority of the sampled respondents (74.9%ECDECM and 59.9%ECDET) strongly agreed with the view that ECDE centers with perimeter walls and strong gates guarantee sexually abused children accessibility to education, enrolment rates and performance. A small proportion of 17.3% of the sampled ECDE Center Managers and 27.4% of the sampled ECDE teachers agreed. At the same time, 2.6% of the sampled ECDE Center Managers and 3.3% of ECDE teachers were undecided, 3.4% of ECDE Center Managers and 5.7% of the ECDE teachers disagreed whereas 1.8% of the sampled ECDE Center Managers as did 3.7% of the ECDE teachers strongly disagreed. These findings lend credence to the views expressed by Volpe (2001) who indicated that a culture of openness and transparency should be promoted which in turn encourages vigilance and a sense of shared responsibility for the safeguarding of pupils to enable them progress well in education.

The study also revealed that majority of the respondents (69.7%ECDECM and 75.3%ECDET) strongly agreed with the view that escorting children to and from school

guarantees sexually abused children accessibility to education, enrolment rates and academic performance. 12.1% of the ECDE Center Managers as did 20.1% of the sampled ECDE teachers agreed. However, 2.1% of ECDE Center Managers and 1.4% of the ECDE teachers were undecided, 10.3% of ECDE Center Managers and 1.3% of the ECDE teachers disagreed whereas 5.8% of the sampled ECDE Center Managers as did 1.9% of the ECDE teachers strongly disagreed. These findings support the views expressed by Slavenas (2008) who indicated that creating a culture that enables concerns about safeguarding and child protection to be expressed and addressed may include whistle blowing procedures. Clear expectations of staff behavior should be set out in a code of conduct. To verify the possible difference between child protection and applicability of rights to education of sexually abused children, the researcher collected data on the number of sexually abused children accessing education, enrollment and academic performance and the results were as in Table 2:

Table 2: Results of the Applicability of Child Protection on Education of the Sexually Abused Children

Aspects of Guidance and Counseling	Education of Sexually Abused Children		
	Accessing Education	Enrollment	Academic Performance
ECDE Centers which provide conducive environment	21	33	65
ECDE Centers which adhere to child protection regulations	23	42	52
ECDE Centers which engage in awareness training	19	73	57
ECDE Centers with perimeter walls and gates	18	54	81
Escorting children to and from school	13	38	77

The results in Table 2 indicate that ECDE Centers which have adopted child protection strategies such as provision of conducive environment, adherence to child protection regulations, awareness training, perimeter walls and escorting children to and from school have more children access education, are enrolled and register impressive academic grades. These results were subjected to ANOVA and results were as indicated in Table 3:

Table 3: ANOVA Analysis of Difference between Child Protection and Accessibility to Education, Enrollment and Academic Performance of Sexually Abused Children

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Between People	377.600	4	94.400		
Between	5761.600	2	2880.800	17.401	.001
Within Items					
People Residual	1324.400	8	165.550		
Total	7086.000	10	708.600		
Total	7463.600	14	533.114		

Grand Mean = 44.40

From the ANOVA statistics in Table 3, the processed data, which is the population parameters, had a significance level of 0.001 which shows that the data is ideal for making a conclusion on the population's parameter as the value of significance (p-value of 0.001) is less than 5%, that is, $p\text{-value}=0.001 < 0.05$. It also indicates that the results were statistically significant and that child protection enhances education of the sexually abused children, that is, accessibility, enrollment and academic performance. Thus, the null hypothesis, H_02 , is rejected. These results were consistent with the findings of a study conducted by Slavenas (2008) which generated a p-value of $0.045 < 0.05$.

1.5 Summary of Research Findings

The study also established that children protection enhances applicability of rights to education of sexually abused children. Provision of safe learning conditions guarantees sexually abused children accessibility to education, enrolment rates and academic performance. In other words, most schools, colleges and academies provide a safe environment for the education of children and young where there are professional relationships based on care, respect and trust. On the same breath, for many teachers and other school staff, promoting the social and emotional development of children is a critical and central aspect of their role and there is no doubt that many who work in education have a profound effect on the lives of their pupils.

These findings affirm the fact that in creating a safe environment and culture in the school, schools should be aware of the critical importance of promoting the emotional health and

wellbeing of children and young people if they are to achieve their potential rather than focus exclusively on attainment. It is therefore essential to create a safe environment in your school for whole school staff and pupils. Adherence to child protection regulations in ECDE Centers also guarantees sexually abused children accessibility to education, enrolment rates and performance. This supports the fact that to create a positive and safe environment for children in school, most institutions have clear guidelines or a code of conduct for all those involved: staff, volunteers, pupils and parents.

It is essential that everyone involved in the school community knows what behaviour is acceptable and what is not. In other words, when expectations are clear, individuals who are not adhering to standard of practice can be challenged. That is, it is a requirement that schools have procedures in place for dealing with child protection concerns, disclosures or allegations in order to support staff, volunteers, young people and parents through the process of reporting any concerns. Similar assertions can be made for awareness training for early childhood learners which also guarantees sexually abused children accessibility to education, enrolment rates and performance. This implies that ECDE centers' whole staff, volunteers and parents must be made aware of the appropriate avenues for pursuing complaints when they are unsatisfied with the internal response to their concern. The school community need to be made aware, in an appropriate way, of the policy and procedures and their responsibilities. It is also paramount that an understanding is made that the protection and welfare of the child is the priority and that any concern about the behavior of a member of staff or other adult working in school must be reported immediately and should thus be embedded in the curriculum and ethos in the school.

ECDE centers with perimeter walls and strong gates also guarantee sexually abused children accessibility to education, enrolment rates and performance which lends credence to the fact a culture of openness and transparency should be promoted which in turn encourages vigilance and a sense of shared responsibility for the safeguarding of pupils to enable them progress well in education. Escorting children to and from school guarantees sexually abused children accessibility to education, enrolment rates and academic performance which too points to the fact that creating a culture that enables concerns about safeguarding and child protection to be expressed and addressed may include whistle blowing procedures. Clear expectations of staff behavior should be set out in a code of conduct.

1.6 Conclusions

Provision of relevant books, teaching aids coupled with stakeholders' enhance the applicability of rights to education of sexually abused children. Stakeholders who have positive attitudes or show interest towards education of sexually abused children enhances their accessibility to education, enrolment rates and academic performance. Stakeholders also witness the social and emotional indicators, inappropriate behaviors and academic consequences and are in a position to implement prevention strategies as part of their daily classroom pedagogy and practice affirming the fact that stakeholders need to have positive attitudes towards the reporting duty and knowledge about the social and educational context of sexual abuse.

1.7 Recommendation

Stakeholders should be trained on different child protection measures so that they can be able to identify and prevent cases or potential instances of child sexual abuse (CSA).

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