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Influence of Child Protection Benchmark on Management Outcomes in Child Friendly Schools of Makueni County, Kenya

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

The influence of child protection as a child-friendly school benchmark on the management outcome in public primary schools has been of interest. Schools in Makueni County (Kenya) have had their share of reported cases of child insecurity with children having been physically violated within the school community, sometimes with corporal punishment cases by teachers to an alarming level. The sought to answer the question: what is the influence level of the child protection internal school benchmark on the management outcome in Child Friendly Schools (CFS) of Makueni County? To answer the question, a mixed-method triangulation design was applied with a convergent model that inculcates regression and correlation models. The study findings establish that schools partially put in place and managed child protection measures as an important benchmark to strengthen management outcomes in CFS. Results from the study determined that there were established rules for visitors to identify themselves (82.1%), rules not to allow people under the influence of illicit drugs at school (85.5%), rules against bullying and corporal punishment (91.8%), not to allow pits in the school compound (65.5%), and buildings at school to be earthquake resistant (27.9%). School management used UNICEF's child-friendly school child protection model as a benchmark on which to provide protection as a child right, thus making the schools more child-friendly.

Keywords: Child friendly school; management outcomes; child protection benchmark.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of "child-friendly school" (CFS) emanated from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), whose resolutions were adopted by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in 1989 and later ratified in 1990. Subsequently, the United Nations Children's Education Fund (UNICEF) developed the CFS model for implementing the concept. The UNICEF grounding of the CFS framework on the rights of the child was based on principles that touch on the rights of children. These principles emphasize the right of all children to receive an education that is free and compulsory as a right, while at the same time setting up an environment that encourages enrolment and attendance.

The child-friendly school model encourages institutions to manage discipline in a fair and humane way, thus endeavouring to develop learners' competencies, talents, personalities, and innate potential to the best of what they are capable of doing. The principles also highly regard the culture and values of the child's home country, which conform to the child's human rights. The child is expected to live freely as a responsible individual who values and highly respects the existence of other people and the natural environment. The success of creating this model depends greatly on effective and transformative management, which must guarantee appropriate managerial practices. In this regard, the management approach to the child-friendly school internal benchmarks offers a solution to making informed decisions on how to manage such benchmarks, which for this study refer to child protection.

The safety and security of children is paramount in the provision of quality education [1]. However, there is a strong indication in studies conducted that confirm a lack of child protection for children while in school. For instance, in a study done in Australia, 15% of students confirmed that bullying was taking place at schools [2] Incidences of bullying, corporal punishments as well as sexual assults have been reported in primary schools in Makueni county [3]. All endeavours to implement child protection measures within the context of school inclusiveness, regardless of the diversity of special needs (SN) among children, is of concern, and therefore, education managers should provide guidelines (benchmarks) on the desired standard measure. Therefore, this study was purposely designed to investigate the influence of the child protection internal school benchmark on the management outcomes in child-friendly (public primary) schools in Makueni County, Kenya.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Child Protection as an Internal School Benchmark in a Child Friendly School

Child protection is paramount in the provision of quality education. However, there is a strong indication in studies conducted confirming that children are not fully protected at school. For instance, in a study done in Australia, 15% of students confirmed that bullying was taking place at schools [2]. In the study, students confirmed how often bullying took place at school among students and whether they told someone whenever bullying took place or whether they witnessed younger ones being bullied by their older colleagues at school.

In another study conducted to assess the level of inclusiveness in Macedonian policy and practice by Johnstone [4] and funded by UNICEF, aggressive behavior by students was seen to be detrimental to friendly schools by students who were respondents. In this study, stakeholders felt that there was a need to supplement social activities as well as activities having to do with education for the purpose of facilitating students' achievement and understanding of their cultural differences with clarity. Surprisingly, primary schools in Australia were reported to have the highest incidences of bullying in comparison to other countries around the world.This was demonstrated in a study involving about 40 countries [5,6].

Further, a study carried out in Ebonyi state in Nigeria revealed that 28% of students reported feeling unsafe walking to and from school [7]. Head teachers in this state reported that their staff taught students skills in self-protection from risks in the community, with 82% of the head teachers reporting that teachers discussed child rights and child labour with families. However, in the same study, in Niger state, 90% of schools were reportedly found to have formal procedures that guided students to freely report occurrences associated with bullying, harassment, or harm by teachers. This therefore confirms that it is the entire school community that provides child protection but not fences or walls, and therefore,

the school ought to strengthen their bonding relations with the immediate community.

Again, the Kenya government has been developing some formal systems for the protection of children since the early 1960s and has all along included legislation that addresses the issues of children, such as the Adoption Act, the Guardianship of Infants Act, and the Children's and Young Person's Act. Further, the ratification of several conventions and treaties (international and national) on child rights has also been completed by the government. These include the United Nations Convention on Rights of the Child on July 30th, 1990, the African Charter on the Rights of Children (2000) and the enactment of the Children's Act (2001), which outlines care options other than the normal ones in the event parents are incapacitated to play their part regarding care for their children (though not well regulated). Others include the Disability Act (2003) and the Sexual Offences Act (2006). Parental responsibility for children is also described by the state in the legal framework on child rights in the Constitution of the Republic of Kenya (2010), which greatly strengthens the resolve of the UNCRC and African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of children.

The Kenya Persons with Disabilities Act (2003), Chapter 21 provides for persons with disabilities an entitlement to an environment which is barrier-free as well as disability-friendly. This ensures their right to access public buildings, assistive devices that promote mobility, roads, and a wide range of social amenities [8]. The undertaking to provide a safe school should regulate access to school grounds and buildings by vehicles and individuals and should use building materials that are durable and non-toxic so as to provide child protection in times of emergency [9]. School safety threats may emanate from within or without the school environment. Mainly, these come in the form of accidents, which have long been wrongly presumed to 'just happen'. Often, accidents in schools are mainly caused by human beings as a result of ignorance, carelessness, negligence, inattentiveness, or irresponsibility by the staff, the learners, or the general stakeholders. Such accidents are caused by wet greasy spots, surfaces that are slippery, lighting that is insufficient, poor ventilation, sharp instruments that are handled carelessly and too many scattered things on the floor [10].

Considering that the teaching and learning process takes place in an environment whereby both the learner and the staff feel safe and secure, school safety stands out as an integral and indispensable component in the programs of the school. The physical organization should enable learners to navigate with ease within the school environment so as to build confidence in perceptions about their safety and security. Stakeholders too should foster a safe school environment in order to maintain increased learner enrolment. This enables retention and completion of the educational cycle, along with attaining quality in education.

In a study conducted in Busia County (then district) – Kenya (2013) about "Situational analysis on conducive learning environments for children withdrawn and prevented from child labour", 79% (N = 300) felt that their classroom environments were safe and secure. The study used drug and alcohol abuse as a determinant of child protection at school, in which 86% of the same sampled population denied having ever witnessed child abuse, drugs or alcohol. The study revealed that of those who witnessed children abusing drugs and alcohol, 64% were girls, which may mean more girls than boys abused drugs.

However, the Kenya government has set out safety standards with guidelines that incorporate the following: the school grounds, health and hygiene, environment, physical infrastructure, food safety, security regarding drug and substance abuse, safety in the socio-cultural environment of the school, disaster risk reduction, school community relations, protection against child abuse, protection regarding children with special needs or disabilities, and transportation safety [11]. These set standards are meant to ensure reasonable protection of learners in schools so that the CFS framework becomes a means to plan for the transformation of an entire education system with ultimate benefits aimed at each and every child within a learning environment. Such an environment guarantees the right to education in a child-centred learning community, is inclusive, and is based on a platform of a child's voice in democratic participation [12].

On the other hand, incidences of bullying, corporal punishment, as well as sexual assult have been reported in primary schools in Makueni county [3]. This has been happening even when schools are assumed to be safe for

children as per the set standards and law. Hence, the need for this research to investigate child protection issues in schools.

2.3 Problem Statement

Implementation of the CFS model in the Kenyan primary schools started as early as 2002, however, the effectiveness of the implementation has been wanting. Article 53 of the 2010 Constitution of Kenya and the international millennium development goals envisages for every child to have the right to free and compulsory basic education commensurate to international standards as provided for in the UNICEF's Model of a Child friendly school. However, the level of child friendliness in the public primary schools as required by the model has not been fully established in Makueni County.

For instance, public primary schools in Makueni County have had a share of the reported cases of child insecurity whereby Children have been physically violated at school and within the immediate school community; sometimes with corporal punishment cases by teachers to an alarming level [3]. On the other hand, non-governmental organizations and the immediate school communities (parents included) have often given schools social and monitory support for improvement of infrastructure, however, the social and more so the physical infrastructure that measures up to provide safety for children is wanting in many schools. Therefore, there exists concerns about child protection in the schools, In this regard, the UNICEF's CFS model provides the benchmarks which are outstandingly connected to the gap hereby established. The benchmarks may inform decision making by managers for the purpose of achieving desired management outcomes in the form of child protection in public primary schools in the county.

3. METHODOLOGY

The researcher used a mixed methods triangulation design with a convergent model. The convergent model was found to be fitting in this study since it provided an opportunity for the researcher to identify the characteristics, frequencies, trends, correlations, and categories of the data which was collected quantitatively and qualitatively by Shona [13].

The design entailed the collection of quantitative and qualitative data, which was analysed separately, and the results for each were compared and mixed at the interpretation level. The researcher mixed, compared, and contrasted the findings; hence, by using the qualitative data set, the quantitative findings were strengthened [14]. The two data sets produced results that converged during the interpretation stage.

The model (figure) enabled production of valid results and conclusions that substantiated the phenomenon at hand fairly well.

For this study, qualitative data was collected from head teachers and county directors, who are administrators in the schools and county, respectively, and who are in better positions to clarify issues to do with the management of CFS. This was done by using open-ended questions in interview schedules and document analysis. The entire data collection procedure involved the collection of data that could be easily explained, predicted, or controlled using a controlled environment of the phenomena under study in which a variety of statistical methods were employed. As explained by Creswell [14] the model is purposely used in order to obtain conclusions that are valid and well-substantiated about a single phenomenon. Questionnaires for collecting quantitative data, interview schedules, and document analysis were therefore the tools used for the research. This approach was considered appropriate for this study since qualitative data was designed to compare and contrast with quantitative data in order to get a better understanding of what the researcher sought out to study about the problem.

In the study, correlation data analysis was used to explain the strength with which respondents understood the benchmark that formed the Child Friendly Schools. Data was collected by way of a survey method, thus enabling the researcher to benefit from the ease of collecting large amounts of information by way of questionnaires for a given sample [15]. Data analysis was done using descriptive and inferential statistics, which included Pearson correlation and regression.

3.1 Target Population

This study (as indicated in the table targeted a population comprising of two county directors (TSC and Ministry), 14,760 pupils of the school leadership, 1,476 head teachers, 11,152 teachers, and 17,712 board of management members. A sample of the population

(distributed as shown in the table below) was studied as a representative of the entire population, which was 45,102.

3.1.1 Sampling procedures and Size

The total sample size in this study was 402 respondents. Based on the probability theory computation, the total population of 45,102 would provide a sample size of 381 respondents (computed at a confidence level of 95%). The researcher deliberately sampled a few more respondents so as to positively strengthen the outcome of the data collected. The 21 respondents, above the minimum requirement of 381 samples, for the population was found more appropriate since the survey was reasonably a large-scale survey operating under near-ideal conditions and therefore presenting an ideal representative proportion of the population [16].

3.2 Construction of Research Instruments

The study question was about the influence level of safety and security internal school benchmark on the management outcome in public primary schools of Makueni County, Kenya.

The study adopted three types of data collection instruments which included questionnaires, interview schedule (only for County Directors and Head Teachers) and document analysis.

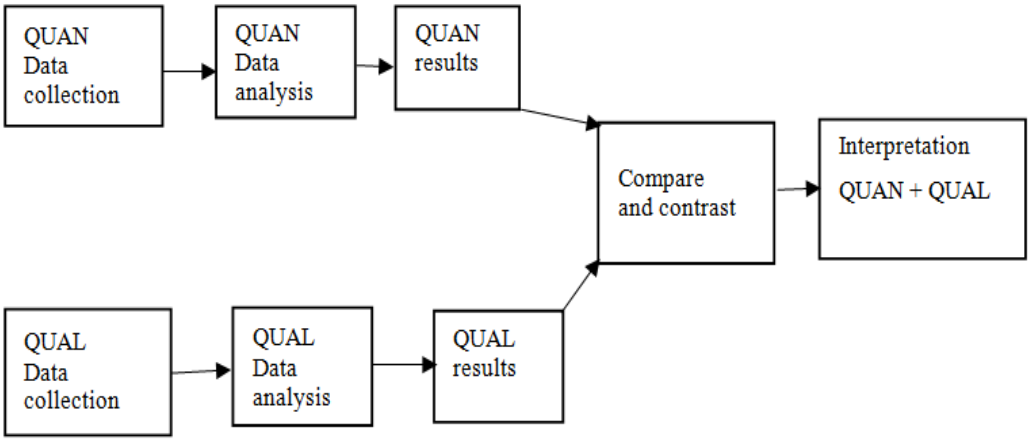

Fig. 1. Triangulation design: convergence model
(Source: Creswell [14]

Table 1. The target population

Categories	Target Population	% Proportion
Pupils	14,760	32.73%
Teachers	11,152	24.73%
County Director	2	0.004%
Head Teachers	1,476	3.27%
BOM	17,712	39.27%
TOTAL	45,102	100%

Table 2. Sampling grid

Category of population	Total population	Sampling procedure	Sample size
County Directors	2	Purposive	2
Head teachers	1,476	Purposive	50
Teachers	11,152	Stratified random	200
Pupils	14,760	Purposive	50
BOM	17,712	Stratified random	100
Total	45,102		402

3.2.1 Testing of validity and reliability and establishment of trustworthiness

The researcher piloted the instruments in three primary schools in Machakos county which neighbours Makueni county and which have similarities. Five teachers in each school and the three Head teachers of the schools participated in the piloting exercise. The sample size was therefore 18 respondents.

A reliability test was carried out whereby the tools were correlated and a coefficient test done as shown in the table.

By use of Cronbach's alpha technique, the Head teachers' questionnaire test for reliability yielded an overall reliability coefficient of 0.878 which is 87.8%. This was acceptable for the study.

By use of Cronbach's alpha technique, the Teachers' questionnaire test for reliability yielded an overall reliability coefficient of 0.822 which is 82.2%. This was acceptable for the study.

3.2.2 Regression model

The following linear regression model was estimated.

$Y = \beta o + \beta 1X1 + \beta 2X2 + \beta 3X3 + \beta 4X4 + \beta 5X5 + \varepsilon$

Where:
Y = School Management Outcomes
X1 = Children's Security
X2 = Inclusion of Learners with SNE
X3 =Community partnership & linkages
X4 = Child health promoting programmes
X5= Equity and Equality promoting among all children
β i; i=1,2,3,4,5} = The coefficients for the various independent variables
ε =Error term

4. DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the findings (table), it is notable that 82.1% (a frequency of 146 – agree and 74 – strongly agree out of 268 respondents) of the respondents indicate that their schools have a policy for all visitors to identify themselves before entry into the school compound. 14.9% (frequency – 40) disagreed, while 3% (F – 8) were neutral. This implies that most schools in the study area provided safe environments that were complimented by the protection policies for their learners. Miske [12] posits that, in a child-friendly school, the security needs of children are given special attention. Such schools always make sure that efforts are constantly made to protect children from harm by ensuring that protection of children is a priority.

Regarding the question on whether the school had strict rules not to allow people to enter the school compound under the influence of drugs, 85.5% (F – 230 out of 269) of the respondents agreed, 12.7% (Frequency – 34) disagreed, while 19% (F – 5) neither agreed nor disagreed. Based on the findings, the majority of the schools that participated in this study enjoyed an environment where the teaching and learning process was significantly favourable for both the learners and the members of staff who felt safe and secure due to a drug-free environment. Child protection in learning institutions stands out as an integral and indispensable benchmark or standard in the management outcome of a child-friendly school.

Again, out of 267 responses, a frequency of 245 responses, making up 91.8% of the respondents, confirmed that there existed school rules against bullying and corporal punishment in child-friendly schools. However, 4.9% (frequency – 13) disagreed, while 3.4% (frequency – 9)

Table 3. Reliability test for Head teachers' questionnaire

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.878	.853	39

Table 4: Reliability test for Teachers' questionnaire

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.822	.786	39

Table 5. Findings on influence of child protection internal school benchmark on management outcomes

Existence of child protection internal school bench mark	1 –A		2-SA		3-D		4-SD		5-N		Total		Mean	SD
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
It's a policy for all visitors to identify themselves before entry into school compound	146	54.5	74	27.6	22	8.2	18	6.7	8	3.0	268	100.0	1.8	1.1
Our school has strict rules not to allow people to enter the school compound under the influence of drugs	118	43.9	112	41.6	22	8.2	12	4.5	5	1.8	269	100.0	1.8	1.9
Our school rules are clear against bullying and corporal punishment	119	44.6	126	47.2	9	3.4	4	1.5	9	3.4	267	100.0	1.7	0.9
Our school does not allow existence of pits in the school compound	108	40.6	69	25.9	45	16.9	35	13.2	9	3.4	266	100.0	2.1	1.2
All buildings in our school are earthquake resistant	45	17.2	28	10.7	44	16.9	70	26.8	74	28.4	261	100.0	2.2	1.4

Table 6. Pearson's Correlation between child protection internal school benchmark and management outcomes

Correlations						
	1	2	3	4	5	6
1.Rating on status of your school as child friendly	1					
	268					
2. It's a policy for all visitors to identify themselves before entry into the school compound	.106	1				
	266	268				
3.Our school has strict rules not to allow people to enter into the compound under the influence of illegal drugs	.193**	.104	1			
	267	268	269			
4.Our school rules are clear against bullying and also against corporal punishment	.214**	.087	.029**	1		
5. Our school does not allow existence of unnecessary pits in the school compound.	.212**	.103	.097	.162**	1	
	264	265	266	264	266	
6. All buildings in our school are earthquake resistant	.141*	.117	.069	.157*	.137*	1
	260	261	262	260	260	262

***.Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). (Source – Researcher 2017)*

were undecided about whether their schools had anti-bullying and corporal punishment policies. These findings indicate that schools in the study area take seriously the status of the child-friendly school environment in regard to mental health as well as the physical health of children besides the education they offer. Any physical or emotional harm by peers or otherwise may cause a learner to skip or stay away from class. As the MOE [8] puts it, child-friendly schools should provide an environment that is safe from bullying and healthy with a high regard to the physical, mental, and emotional health of children, and as such, schools should respect the aptitude and capacity of children with a high regard to the environment and curriculum so as to suit children's needs.

Pits are considered health hazards within the school compound. This study was carried out to establish whether children were protected from injuries that may have been caused by unnecessary pits within the school compound. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of understanding regarding whether or not pits were permitted in their school compound. In this regard, 66.5% (Frequency – 177 out of 266 responses) of the respondents indicated that their schools did not allow the existence of pits in their compound; 32.8% (Frequency – 80 out of 266) disagreed; and 3.4% (Frequency – 9 out of 266) were neutral. This implies that the management of various schools has taken due consideration of the safety of children. In this regard, the school management in the sampled schools has made efforts to provide school environments that are safe and secure from causing physical harm to children by making school compounds pit free. In addition to ensuring retention and completion of the educational cycle at the appropriate time, and providing quality education in accordance with the Ministry of Education's guidelines on school safety [8].

On the security measure regarding protection of buildings against destruction by earthquakes, a frequency of 73 out of 261 of the responses (27.9%) confirms that all buildings in their schools were earthquake resistant. Furthermore, 43.7% (114 out of 261) of respondents disagree that the buildings in their schools were earthquake resistant. The remaining 28.4% (74 out of 261) gave a neutral response when asked if the buildings in their schools were earthquake resistant. This implies that in the majority of schools in the study area, the teaching and learning process took place in an environment in which both students and teachers were not safe and secure in the buildings they used. This therefore means that child-friendly school management needs to prioritize safety and security of learners as an integral and indispensable component in the management programmes of their schools while they construct buildings.

Conclusively, the results agree with Udo & Chuks [9] who posit that the undertaking to provide a safe school should be a priority to maximize the accessibility of the school grounds and corridors and should increase a sense of ownership and orientation by providing comfort and clearly defining the boundaries that make the school. He further states that the school management should regulate access to school grounds and buildings by vehicles and individuals, and that the construction of buildings should use building materials that are durable and non-toxic so as to provide safety in times of emergency. Conclusively, the school infrastructure should be safe for all children.

For further tests, inferential statistical analysis was computed and a correlation analysis was carried out to test the degree and level of relationship between public primary child-friendly schools and the existence of child protection as a benchmark in management outcomes by using Pearson’s correlations. The hypothesis was rejected or accepted at 90% and 95% levels of confidence. Only findings that showed a significant relationship with the rating of child-friendly schools were picked for discussion.

On correlation analysis, various relationships were established between the presence of a child protection internal school benchmark in the management outcome of child-friendly schools. At a 95% level of confidence, a weak positive correlation coefficient of 0.193** was obtained between the rating of a child-friendly school and the school with strict rules not to allow people under the influence of illegal drugs to enter the compound. Schools that protect children from bullying were found to be child-friendly. This was accomplished through a weak positive relationship with a correlation coefficient of 0.214** at a 95% level of confidence, based on the school's rating as child-friendly and the availability of clear rules against corporal punishment. This implies that in the study area, the teaching and learning process were taking place in an environment whereby both the

learner and the staff felt safe and secure. School safety stands out as an integral and indispensable component in the programs of the school.

Findings in the study also show a child-friendly school to be closely linked to a compound free from health hazards such as unnecessary pits within the school compound. In this regard, a positive correlation was found between the rating of child-friendly schools and the non-existence of pits in the school compound. Other child protection dimensions were studied and those which were found to affect the child-friendly schools set up were the ability of the school buildings to withstand natural disasters such as earth quakes. A weak but positive correlation of.141* at a 95% level of confidence between the rating on the status of the school as child-friendly and the school building's having an earthquake resistant building was established. Miske [12] says that in child-friendly schools, the health and security needs of children are given special attention in the schools. Such schools prohibit corporal, physical, and mental punishment of children, and efforts are constantly made to protect children from harm or even abuse.

4.1 Thematic Analysis on the Qualitative Data

Qualitative data was collected in an interview schedule/document analysis whereby, open-ended questions in an interview process to County Directors and Head Teachers was done.

4.1.1 Document analysis about child protection as a school benchmark

The researcher analysed documents about the construction of a number of structures in the schools studied, especially those that were about child protection in the schools. From the, it was observed that, three-quarter of the school compound was fenced using either barbed wire or thorny branches of trees, but very few had lockable gates. None of the schools visited had a gatekeeper who recorded visitors entering the school compound. However, all schools had visitor's books at the head teacher's office. From the records, materials and construction plans ensured that there were no cases of unsafe buildings; most buildings in the schools were permanently constructed. Again, documents held in the head teacher's office indicated that Bill of Material (BOMs) often discussed and documented matters related to the security of children in their schools.

Based on the safety standards provided by the government of Kenya, members of staff in schools need to collaborate with parents to address the safety needs of learners and ensure that clear policies about visitors to schools are monitored as well as provide training for staff to address concerns about the protection of children [11]. However, the finding here confirms a study in Busia County, Kenya [17] about 'Situational analysis on conducive learning environments for children withdrawn and prevented from child labour', in which 79% of respondents felt that their classroom environments were safe and secure.

4.1.2 Interview: County Directors and Head Teachers about child protection as an internal school bench mark

An open-ended questionnaire was subjected to County directors and Head teachers from whom the following is the content summary of the emerging themes from the qualitative data analysis; Generally, the outstanding themes were captures from responses provided by Head teachers who according to this study are well placed as managers of the CFSs to provide credible information regarding internal benchmarks on management outcomes of the Public Primary Schools. For instance,

County Director (CD) 1 stated that,

"Teachers in this county have the exclusive responsibility to monitor learners' security needs of children which we can say has been effective".

(A CD aged above 50 years)

County Director (CD) 2 stated that,

"We have ensured that Schools provide healthy and secure environments for learners and other members of the school community"
(A CD aged above 50 years)

HT1 stated that,

"Learners feel that their classroom environments are safe and secure as far as child buse is concerned, drugs and alcohol".
(A Male Head teacher aged 47 years)'
while HT 2 made the statement that;

"My school administration ensures that all children are protected here in school although there are isolated cases of peer bullying".
(A female Head teacher aged 49 years)'

Again, HT 3 stated;

"The safety of children in this school is often an item in the BOM meetings agenda once in every term and ensures the school community is sensitized on the need to protect children in and outside school"

(A female Head teacher aged 42 years).

Another emerging theme was clear by HT4 thus;

"My school administration has fenced the entire school compound to ensure that all children are protected from outsiders"

(A Male Head teacher aged 52 years).

HT5 also provided the theme that;

"All teachers and parents association members are strongly involved in discussions to set up policies to protect all children including assessing the entire school infrustrucuture to ensure it meets required safety standards set out by the government".

(A Male Head teacher aged 53 years).

From these themes, it is outstandingly clear that county directors were concerned about the safety and security of children in schools, in line with the government's policy on the same. From HTs, it is also clear that most schools were fenced, a theme that was found well supported by the document analysis in this study. Themes showed that it was on the agenda in most schools to discuss safety and protection of children. The majority of buildings in schools were found safe for use by learners going by the themes established and supported by the documentation in the schools. The themes strongly seem to display head teachers' having heeded the ministry's instruction that stakeholders should foster a school environment that is safe and secure in order to maintain increased learner enrolment in addition to ensuring retention and completion of the educational cycle, besides attaining quality in education [11].

4.1.3 Regression analysis on child protection as an internal school benchmark

Regression analysis was done to establish the relationship of child protection internal school benchmark and management outcome in PPSs of Makueni County.

4.1.4 Regression Model

This was based on the following equation for Children's Security

$y1 = f\ (\beta1 + g1+g2+g3+\varepsilon)$

Where:
y1 = Management outcomes in Public Primary Schools
β1 = Constant variable
g1 = Policy on children's safety and security
g2 = Security threats from poor physical infrastructure
g3 = Security against bad outsiders
ε = Error term

Average scores of (independent variables) which are the policy on child protection, Security threats from poor physical infrastructure and Security against bad outsiders which were regressed with average scores on rating on management outcomes in schools as child friendly as presented in the model summary, analysis of variance tests, and summary of coefficients shown in the table.

Table 7. Model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	P value
1	.851a	.804	.800	.372	0.010
Predictors: (Constant) policy on children child protection, Security threats from poor physical infrastructure and Security against bad outsiders					

Table 8. Coefficients of child protection school benchmark and management outcomes

Coefficients'					
Model	**Unstandardized Coefficients**		**Standardized Coefficients**	**t**	**Sig.**
				.452	**.000**
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.067	.148			
Policy on children safety and security	.610	.085	.620	-1.298	.000
Security threats from poor physical infrastructure	.773	.095	.669	1.829	.001
Security against bad outsiders	.804	.028	.801	.149	.002

a. Dependent Variable: Management outcomes of child friendly schools

Adjusted R squared is coefficient of determination which indicates the variation in the dependent variable due to changes in the independent variable. From the table above, the value of adjusted R squared was 0.800, an indication that there was variation of 80.0% on dependent variable at P value .010<.050. This means the model provided a good fit in school child protection and management outcomes of child friendly schools. The study therefore rejects the null hypothesis that child protection internal school benchmark has no influence on management outcomes in public primary schools of Makueni County, at 95% level of confidence.

Coefficient of regression in this study was used to show the relative contribution of each of the indicators of child protection to management outcomes of CFS. The findings are as shown in the table.

The coefficient of regression in this study indicates that the model had a constant value 0.067. Policy on children safety and security had a β coefficient of .620 and a p value of 0.00>0.05 denoting that the policy on children safety and security benchmark have a significant contribution towards management outcomes Public primary schools. On the other hand, security threats from poor physical infrastructure had a coefficient of 0.669 which was statistically significant with a p value of 0.01>0.05, indicating that this significantly contribute towards management outcomes of child friendly schools. Security against bad outsiders too yielded a coefficient of 0.801 and a p value of 0.02>0.05, which was statistically significant.

4.2 Mixing the Qualitative and Quantitative Interpretations and Implications

From the qualitative and quantitative data collected, a descriptive, inferential, and thematic analysis was done in relation to the extent of the existence of child protection internal school benchmark in the management outcome in (public primary schools) child-friendly schools in Makueni county. Conflicting information was clear from the study findings. For instance, in the quantitative analysis, 82.1% of respondents indicated that there were clear policies for visitors to identify themselves as they enter school compounds, but the qualitative data did not indicate clear proof of documented policies on the matter. This study assumes that respondents who provided the quantitative data disregarded the registration of visitors at the gate but felt it was important enough for the registration that was found done in the head teachers' offices (visitor's book)—from document analysis.

The qualitative data strengthened the quantitative data collected to give credence to the study in regard to schools, making it an important agenda item to discuss child protection in a collaborative manner between parents and teachers. Child protection spans from maintaining healthy inter-pupil relationships as well as pupil-teacher relationships. Protection of children from external people in most schools was established through visitor identification policies, environmental protection, as well as the safety of school buildings and construction. Therefore, child protection as an internal school benchmark stands out as an integral and

indispensable component in the programs of a school management outcome.

4.3 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Child protection as an internal school benchmark was commonly found to influence management outcomes of child friendly schools. This was indicated by majority of schools that were found to have policies for managing safety and security; for example, majority of the schools that were examined were found to have policies to identify visitors as they entered the school compound and policies that did not allow existence of pits in the school compound.

Policy on child protection from drugs had a β coefficient of .620 and a p value of $0.00 > 0.05$ denoting that the availability of policy on child protection from drugs has a significant contribution towards management outcomes in Public primary schools. On the other hand, security threats from poor physical infrastructure had a coefficient of 0.669 which was statistically significant with a p value of $0.01 > 0.05$, indicating that this significantly contribute towards management outcomes of child friendly schools. Security against bad outsiders too yielded a coefficient of 0.801 and a p value of $0.02 > 0.05$, which was statistically significant.

The summary emerging from the qualitative data and obtained from the analysis of the interviews with county directors and head teachers acknowledged the existence of child protection policies in the management of CFS. They indicated being aware of the existence of classrooms that were safe and secure for children's protection. Schools were indicated to be significantly working to control alcohol, drug, and substance abuse by children.

Another recurring theme in the interviews with county directors and head teachers was that most schools had strict rules for identifying visitors and prohibiting anyone under the influence of drugs or alcohol from entering the school grounds. Child-Friendly Schools had structured policies that reinforced and ensured child-friendly schools promoted protection practices in their management. Good management of environmental protection as well as the safety of school buildings and structures that existed in the child-friendly schools were also found to contribute to child protection. Protection of learners was therefore found to play a significant role in the management outcomes of child-friendly schools.

A child-friendly school nurtures a school-friendly child, supports children's growth and development, and creates a school-friendly community [18]. Findings in this study confirm Munyasi [19] that unsafe school environments have an influence on child care, health, hygiene, and sanitation. These influences underscore the urgent need for enhanced safety in learning institutions in order to provide a safe school environment. Arum [20] indicates that if students feel unsafe in school, they are less able to concentrate in class and perform poorly in assessments because feelings of safety are positively related to both behavior and academic outcome. Reviewed studies indicate a safe school social environment as one where there is a clean facility and caring teachers. Respectful relationships between peers are also an important facet of a safe school social environment [21,22]. According to Perkins [23] a report by the National School Board Association noted that a positive school environment was a crucial factor that differentiated between schools with high and low rates of delinquency.

5. CONCLUSION

Conclusively, the significant relationship between the child protection internal school benchmark and the rating of management outcome of child-friendly schools could be indicative of the little emphasis placed on the practice by many schools. Makueni County has been found to have schools that need to enhance their child protection measures so as to address the remaining gaps, especially in child protection from unidentified visitors and unsafe buildings. This implies a need to enhance the level of child protection measures in the management of child-friendly schools. The study therefore finds that good management o f child protection as a child-friendly school benchmark significantly contributes to management outcomes where the school environment provides protection as a right for children.

CONSENT

As per international standard, parental written consent has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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