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Effective Implementation of 100% Transition Policy on School Efficiency in Public Secondary Schools in Nyandarua County, Kenya

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Abstract: Despite policy efforts to improve access to secondary education, student performance and overall school efficiency in public secondary schools in Nyandarua County remain below expectations. This study investigated the effective implementation of 100% transition policy on school efficiency in public secondary schools in Nyandarua County, Kenya. It was guided by one research question: How does the implementation of 100% transition policy on access to public secondary schools' influence school efficiency in Nyandarua County? Human capital theory was adopted. This was a mixed methods study that applied convergent parallel design. It targeted 180 public secondary, 180 principals as well as 31,065 form three and four students. The study also targeted one County Director of Education. The study sampled 414 respondents. Questionnaires and interview guides were used to collect data from participants. Validity and reliability of the research instruments were tested. Verbatim and thematic approach analysis was done for qualitative data while quantitative data analysis was done by use of descriptive statistics with the help of SPSS version 26 software. The findings were that 100% transition policy has increased student enrolment in public secondary schools in Nyandarua County, leading to overcrowded classrooms and inadequate learning spaces. This strain on infrastructure has negatively affected teaching effectiveness, student engagement, and the overall quality of learning. Improvised learning areas and overburdened facilities, particularly laboratories, highlight the mismatch between increased access and available resources.

Keywords: Implementation, 100% Transition Policy, Efficiency, Class Size, Public Secondary School

1.1 Background of the Study

Education and training are critical investments that facilitate the acquisition of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and social values, contributing to individual empowerment and national development (Psacharopoulos & Patrinos, 2020). They also promote various competencies and techniques that are essential for improving individual productivity, effectiveness, and efficiency. The UN 2030 Agenda endorses quality education under the Sustainable Development Goal 4 as a way to achieving the other remaining SDGs, having sustainability as a goal for education as the target (Mackatiani, 2020). Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) aims to ensure that all children complete free, equitable, and quality primary and secondary education.

Transition is defined as the flow of students between different stages in the school system: from one level to the next, between grades within a given level, and out of and back into schools (World Bank, 2008, p. 7; O'Brien et al, 2011, p. 20). The transition to secondary school is a critical life stage for young people and a period of adjustment that aligns with major social, emotional, and physiological changes during adolescence (Balvin & Banati, 2016; Lee, Hollarek, & Krabbendam, 2018). The transition rate is considered a key indicator of the balance or imbalance between different levels of education development (Chimombo, 2019). One hundred percent transition policy is a global campaign whose aim is to give all children access to 12 years of learning as a show of the government's commitment to its constitutional obligation of the right to education (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology [MOEST], 2018). According to the sustainable development goal four (SDG4), target one aims at ensuring that universal and equal quality primary and secondary education is available to all children.

Globally, the push for universal access to basic education has been a cornerstone of educational policy, with many countries adopting strategies to ensure equitable access to both primary and secondary education (UNESCO, 2020). As part of this international agenda, the policy of 100% transition is a specific measure to make sure that every learner continues his/her education at the primary level and transits to secondary education. It aims to leave no child behind after completing primary school and sitting for national examinations (Mathe, 2016). Transition to secondary school is not only a critical link between primary and tertiary education, but also a transformative phase with far-reaching social and economic benefits. For instance, according to the World Bank (2018), secondary education helps prevent early marriage and delays sexual activity among girls, thereby reducing the risk of contracting HIV and AIDS. Moreover, access to secondary education reduces poverty and increases employment opportunities, particularly for girls. The Sustainable Development Goal 4 has ten targets. The first target 4.1 requires by 2030 to ensure that all girls and boys transit and access free, equitable and quality secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes (Loewe & Rippin, 2015).

In the United States, enrolment has declined in recent years, with figures dropping from 15% to 10% over the past 15 years (U.S. Department of Education, 2020). This decline has been partly attributed to the rising costs associated with public schooling, including indirect expenses such as transportation, uniforms, and extracurricular activities. Additionally, the rapid expansion of charter schools since the 1990s has further shifted enrolment patterns. As charter schools emerged as perceived improvements over traditional public schools, many families particularly those who previously opted for private schooling transitioned to the charter system (Chakrabarti & Roy, 2018). These were typically households for whom private education was financially feasible, but who now viewed charter schools as offering comparable or better value at a lower cost.

In African states the need for Education for All (EFA) has led to an increased demand for secondary education. Pressure exerted on governments in the SSA in the expansion and access of secondary education has increased. An increase in the numbers of learners transiting from primary to secondary education has expanded and consequently the need for improving the conditions in secondary institutions. Sub-Saharan African governments in collaboration with their partners in finance issues are tirelessly working hard to ensure that secondary education becomes more accessible, more relevant and also of a good quality (World Bank, 2017). In Mauritius according to Elacqua (2018) the programme of secondary education fees subsidy was introduced and only those learners who won scholarship of primary school-leaving examinations were entitled in the state schools. Mauritius government

encouraged basic education as a social-economic development objective. The schooling is tuition free and parents pay additional tuition, school uniforms and books, 50 per cent of children receive secondary education, a seven-year course. As a result, the ratio of pupils to teachers was a greater in the state schools because the number of subjects taught in the state schools was quite large.

In Kenya, the government has been putting in place programmes which have led to a drastic expansion of the education sector (MOEST, 2015). Some of these programmes include; introduction of Free Primary Education (FPE) in 2003 and subsidized Free Day Secondary Education (SFDSE) in 2008 in order to enable learner retention in schools, tackle illiteracy, low quality of education provided, and also the low rate of completion in secondary school, high cost of education and poor or even lack of community involvement (Republic of Kenya, 2013). In agreement to implement and achieve the 100% transition policy and handle the low rates of transition, FDSE was introduced by the Kenyan government. However, provision of secondary education is still faced by many challenges such as lack of enough teaching staff, less and sub-standard infrastructure, disparity in distribution of resources between different levels of schools, that is, National, Extra County, County and Sub-County schools, public as well as private secondary schools (NESSP, 2018). The government of Kenya implementation of the 100 percent transition policy has led to a very great increase in the enrolment in most public secondary schools across the country (EMIS, 2019). According to MOE (2023), Nyandarua County recorded a significant increase in enrolment across nearly all public secondary schools between 2018 and 2023, reflecting the impact of Kenya's 100% transition policy. This surge has strained the available facilities as well as teaching and learning materials. In 2024, gross enrolment rates, in Nyandarua County increased from 43% to 68%, marking significant progress despite notable regional disparities (Ministry of Education, 2024). However, public secondary schools continue to face systemic challenges including inadequate infrastructure, and socio-economic barriers that hinder universal access to secondary education (Karugu, Oanda, & Sifuna, 2024). It is on this basis that this study attempted to research on how 100% transition policy on efficiency in a school can be effectively implemented in the public secondary schools in Nyandarua County in Kenya.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Globally, secondary education serves as a crucial stage in preparing young people for a productive and fulfilling adult life by equipping them with essential skills for social, economic, and political participation (UNESCO, 2019). It provides a strong foundation for lifelong learning, employment opportunities, and civic engagement, contributing to both individual and national development. In many countries, access to quality secondary education is linked to improved income levels, better health outcomes, and greater political awareness, making it a key driver of sustainable development (World Bank, 2021). The implementation of Kenya's 100% transition policy has led to a significant rise in enrolment rates in many counties in Kenya Nyandarua County included, where gross enrolment increased from 43% to 68% by 2024 (MOE, 2024) its execution has brought about new challenges related to school efficiency. Several studies have highlighted that although the policy has expanded access, it has also overwhelmed the capacity of many public secondary schools. For instance, Oduor and Mugo (2022) found that most schools in rural counties faced overcrowding, limited physical infrastructure, and teacher shortages, undermining the quality of teaching and learning. Similarly, Wanjala and Wambua (2021) noted that increased enrolment without proportional investment in school facilities and human resources has led to reduced student performance, higher dropout rates, and overburdened teachers. In Nyandarua County, these challenges are compounded by systemic issues such

as poverty, limited community support, and uneven resource allocation (Karugu, Oanda, & Sifuna, 2024). As a result, questions remain about how effectively the 100% transition policy has been implemented in enhancing not just access, but also school efficiency defined by indicators such as optimal use of resources, teacher workload balance, academic achievement, and retention rates. Despite the policy's good intentions, there was limited empirical data specifically evaluating its effect on school efficiency at the county level. It was against this problem that this study sought to investigate the effective implementation of 100% transition policy on school efficiency in public secondary Schools in Nyandarua County, Kenya.

1.3 Research Question

This study was guided by one research question:

1. How does the implementation of 100% transition policy on access to public secondary schools' influence school efficiency in Nyandarua County?

1.4 Theoretical Framework of the Study

This study was anchored on Human Capital Theory (HCT), which posits that investments in education and training increase the productivity and efficiency of individuals, thereby benefiting the economy and society at large. Originating from the works of Schultz (1961) and Becker (1964), HCT emphasizes that education enhances an individual's skills, knowledge, and competencies, which are essential for economic development and social mobility. Human Capital Theory is relevant in assessing school efficiency the dependent variable in this study since efficient schools are critical in transforming increased access (through the transition policy) into meaningful educational outcomes. If schools are inefficient due to overcrowding, high student-teacher ratios, inadequate infrastructure, or poor retention then the anticipated benefits of investing in human capital may not be fully realized. Thus, HCT helps frame the study's investigation into how the effective implementation of the 100% transition policy (independent variable) influences factors such as class size, and teacher allocation, and how these, in turn, affect school efficiency in public secondary schools in Nyandarua County. One of the strengths of HCT is its ability to link educational access and quality to national development goals. It provides policymakers with a rationale for investing in education systems, particularly secondary education, which is critical for equipping learners with the competencies required in the labor market (OECD, 2021). Additionally, HCT is effective in explaining disparities in income and employment outcomes based on levels of education. It supports the idea that individuals with higher educational attainment are more likely to secure better-paying and more stable jobs, which justifies public investment in education as a means of reducing poverty and inequality (World Bank, 2020). Despite its strengths, Human Capital Theory has been criticized for its overly economic view of education, often reducing learning to a means of increasing productivity and earnings while overlooking its broader social, moral, and civic purposes (Olaniyan & Okemakinde, 2022). The theory also assumes equal access to educational opportunities, ignoring structural inequalities such as poverty, gender disparities, and regional imbalances that affect educational outcomes (Tikly, 2020). The theory supports the study's focus on school efficiency by linking increased enrolment driven by the transition policy to the need for adequate educational inputs such as teachers, classrooms, and learning materials. Efficient management of these resources is essential to convert access into meaningful learning outcomes and long-term societal benefits. Therefore, HCT provides a relevant lens through which to examine how effectively public secondary schools in Nyandarua County are implementing the 100% transition policy while maintaining educational quality and institutional performance.

1.5 Review of Related Literature

The implementation of the 100% Transition Policy in many countries has significantly influenced class sizes and the availability of learning spaces, particularly in secondary schools. Ng and Newpher (2021) conducted a study in the United States of America examining the effect of class size on student performance in a team-based learning course. The study adopted a descriptive research design with a target population of 841 participants. This study found that increasing student numbers negatively impacts the learning environment by straining resources, limiting teacher-student interaction, and diminishing the quality of education. It emphasized the importance of strategic infrastructure investment to mitigate such effects.

In Africa, Muyoyeta, Abah, and Denuga (2020) conducted a study in Namibia's Khomas Educational Region that investigated the school-based factors affecting the academic performance of Grade 12 learners in the Namibia Senior Secondary Certificate Ordinary Level Biology. The study employed a mixed-methods research approach and targeted a population comprising 450 students, 15 Biology teachers, and 15 heads of science departments, making a total of 480 participants. Random sampling was used to select respondents, although the sampling procedure lacked detailed explanation, particularly regarding stratification or representation across schools. Data for the study were collected through questionnaires and interview schedules. However, the study did not clearly outline the methods used and there was insufficient elaboration on the data analysis procedures, especially how the quantitative data were analyzed statistically or how qualitative themes were extracted and interpreted.

Changwe and Mulenga (2020) conducted a study in Ndola District, Zambia, focusing on students' transition and the availability of learning resources for the implementation of the Computer Studies curriculum in selected public primary schools. The study employed a qualitative research approach using a descriptive design. It targeted 54 primary schools organized into 9 zones, from which a purposive sample of 9 schools was drawn one from each zone. The study involved 72 respondents, including 9 head teachers, 18 Computer Studies teachers, and 45 learners. Data were collected using a semi-structured interview guide, observation checklist, document analysis, and focus group discussion guide, and analyzed thematically. Findings from the study revealed that increased student enrolment exerted pressure on school infrastructure, with implications for classroom space and the quality of teacher-student interaction. Overcrowded classrooms hindered the ability of teachers to address diverse learning needs effectively. These results emphasized the strain on infrastructure due to student transition policies. However, a number of methodological and contextual gaps remain. The study was limited to the primary school level and specifically centered on the implementation of the Computer Studies curriculum. It did not explore the effective implementation of 100% transition policy on school efficiency in public secondary schools, where the effects on class size strain are likely more pronounced.

Othoo, Olel, and Gogo (2019) conducted a study on the influence of teaching and learning resources on the academic performance of public secondary schools in Kuria East and Kuria West Sub-Counties, Kenya. The researchers adopted a descriptive survey research design and engaged a sample of 36 principals and 138 teachers. Although the study offered valuable insights into how teaching and learning resources affect academic outcomes, it also highlighted a critical issue: the impact of increasing class sizes, especially in light of the 100% transition policy, which has led to overcrowding in many schools. The key finding of the study was that larger class sizes impede effective teaching and assessment

practices. The situation has been exacerbated by the 100% transition policy, which mandates that all learners move from primary to secondary school. This influx of students without a corresponding increase in infrastructure, teachers, or instructional materials poses a threat to the quality of education delivered.

While it briefly referenced the 100% transition policy and its strain on school resources, it did not directly investigate the effect of the one hundred percent transition policy on class size influence school efficiency in public secondary schools. Furthermore, the study lacked clarity on the sampling techniques used and did not report on the reliability and validity of its data collection instruments. The exclusive use of descriptive analysis limited the depth of understanding, as it omitted qualitative insights into the experiences of teachers and students affected by overcrowding. These omissions highlight a methodological and contextual gap that necessitates a focused, mixed-methods study on how the 100% transition policy affects classroom environments and learning conditions in Kenyan public secondary schools.

Njenga (2019) conducted a study on institutional determinants of the implementation of the 100% transition policy in public secondary schools in Central Nyandarua Sub-County, Kenya. Using a descriptive survey research design, the study targeted a population of 1,603 respondents, including education officials, principals, teachers, BOM chairpersons, and students. The findings revealed that teaching and learning spaces significantly hindered the successful implementation of the 100% transition policy, particularly due to overcrowding and a lack of specialized classrooms, especially in rural areas.

1.6 Methodology

This research was conducted using a convergent parallel mixed-methods research design, which enabled the researcher to collect both quantitative and qualitative data, analyse them independently, and subsequently integrate the findings during interpretation (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). This design was particularly suitable for the study as it allowed for the examination of quantifiable associations between the implementation of the 100% transition policy and school efficiency, while also capturing the lived experiences and perspectives of key education stakeholders. The quantitative component utilized a descriptive cross-sectional survey design, which measures variables at a given point in time and identifies patterns or trends within a population (Levin, 2020). This design was appropriate because it allowed the study to investigate the extent to which the 100% transition policy affected class size and overall school efficiency without manipulating the natural setting. For qualitative paradigm, phenomenology design was used to collect data during interviews. The target population comprised 180 public secondary schools, their 180 principals, and 31,065 Form Three and Four students, selected due to their longer exposure to secondary school education. Additionally, the study targeted one County Director of Education, who possessed comprehensive knowledge regarding the implementation of the 100% transition policy (Nyandarua County Education Office, EMIS, November 2024). These groups were chosen because of their critical roles in policy implementation and school management, as well as their capacity to provide reliable and relevant information on the effects of the policy on school efficiency. Sampling of schools was conducted using a proportionate stratified technique. Out of the 180 public secondary schools in Nyandarua County, a sample of 18 schools, representing 10% of the population, was selected. This approach aligns with Mugenda and Mugenda (2013), who asserted that a sample size of 10 to 30 percent is adequate for survey research designs. The stratified sampling ensured

that the selected schools reflected the distribution of public secondary schools across the county, enhancing representativeness.

For the sampling of students, a simple random sampling technique was employed to select participants from Form Three and Form Four classes. Simple random sampling gives each individual an equal and independent chance of being selected, minimizing selection bias and ensuring that the sample is representative of the population (Adam, 2020). Purposive sampling technique was employed to select 18 principals from the sampled schools, ensuring that the number of principals reflected the distribution of the selected schools across the county. This approach enhanced representativeness and minimized sampling bias. The County Director of Education was selected using a purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling allowed the researcher to deliberately select an individual with specific knowledge and experience relevant to the study objectives (Memon et al., 2025). The CDE was chosen due to the strategic leadership role in overseeing education policies and administrative matters within Nyandarua County. Data were carefully checked for completeness, coded according to the research objectives, and entered into Microsoft Excel for initial processing. The cleaned data were then exported to SPSS version 26 for statistical analysis. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, tables, bar graphs, and pie charts, were used to summarize the data. These summaries highlighted general trends and patterns, particularly regarding student enrolment, class size, and student-teacher ratios. Thematic analysis was applied to analyse qualitative data obtained through interviews with school principals and the County Director of Education, document analysis, and observations. The researcher began by transcribing interviews and reviewing field notes. Key concepts and terms were identified and organized into codes, which were then grouped into themes aligned with the research questions. The findings were presented narratively, with direct quotations from participants to substantiate the themes and provide rich, contextual insights into the effects of the policy on school efficiency.

1.7 The Study Findings

Return Rate of Research Instruments

The study had instruments' return rate of 99.1%. The success of almost 100% was nictitated by keen supply and immediate collection of the instruments by the researcher and assistants. Return rate is illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1: Return Rate of Research Instruments

Respondents	Administered	Response	Response Rate in Percentage
Principals	18	18	100%
Students	395	317	80.3%
CDE	1	1	100%
Total	414	336	81.2%

Source: Field Data, 2025

Table 1 indicates that 18 principles were interviewed as the study had planned. The response rate is indicative of a high level of engagement and cooperation from the respondents, which is essential for ensuring the reliability and validity of the study's findings. Out of 395 questionnaires given to students, 317 were returned. One CDE was also interviewed.

One Hundred Percent Transition Policy on Access and School Efficiency

Students in Nyandarua County were given a Likert scale with 1 being a strong disagreement and 5 representing different degrees of agreement or disagreement with statements about the impact of the 100% transition policy on public secondary school enrolment on school efficiency. "1=strongly disagree 2=Disagree, 3= neutral, 4= Agree 5= strongly agree. The results may be shown in Table 6.

Table 2: Response on Access to Public Secondary School According to Students n=317

Statements	Strongly Disagree F (%)	Disagree F (%)	Neutral F (%)	Agreed F (%)	Strongly Agree F (%)
The 100% transition policy has increased student enrolment in my school.	50 (15.8%)	11 (3.5%)	112 (35.2%)	42 (13.2%)	102 (32.2%)
The increased access has improved fairness in secondary education opportunities.	22 (6.9%)	41 (12.9%)	17 (5.4%)	17 (5.4%)	220 (69.4%)
The rise in admissions has led to overcrowding in the school.	23 (7.3%)	32 (10.1%)	10 (3.2%)	183 (57.7%)	60 (18.9%)
Despite the higher number of students, the school runs its programs efficiently.	67 (21.1%)	15 (4.7%)	13 (4.1%)	169 (53.3%)	53 (16.7%)
Access to facilities such as laboratories and libraries has become more limited.	27 (8.5%)	16 (5.0%)	12 (3.8%)	238 (75.1%)	24 (7.6%)
The school has managed to expand resources to meet the increased enrolment.	159 (50.2%)	20 (6.3%)	15 (4.7%)	83 (26.2%)	40 (12.6%)
Admission processes are well-organized under the 100% transition policy.	10 (3.2%)	19 (6.0%)	11 (3.5%)	60 (18.9%)	217 (68.5%)

Source: *Field Data (2025)*

Table 2 presents students' perceptions on the effects of the 100% transition policy in secondary schools, based on responses from 317 participants. The findings reveal varied views on how the policy has influenced enrolment, fairness, school operations, and resource availability. Majority, 102 (32.2%) of respondents strongly agreed and 42 (13.2%) agreed, that the 100% transition policy has increased student enrolment in their schools. Nevertheless, 50 (15.8%) strongly disagreed, 11 (3.5%) disagreed, while 112 (35.2%) remained neutral. This suggests that while many students recognized the positive impact of the policy on enrolment, a considerable number did not perceive a substantial change.

Regarding fairness in secondary education opportunities, the majority of respondents, 220 (69.4%) strongly agreed and 17 (5.4%) agreed that increased access has improved equity in education. A smaller proportion, 22 (6.9%) strongly disagreed, 41 (12.9%) disagreed, and 17 (5.4%) were neutral, indicating

that most students perceive the policy as enhancing fairness, although some remain unconvinced. On the issue of overcrowding, 183 (57.7%) agreed and 60 (18.9%) strongly agreed that the rise in admissions has led to congestion in schools. Only 23 (7.3%) strongly disagreed, 32 (10.1%) disagreed, and 10 (3.2%) were neutral. These findings highlight that overcrowding is a widely experienced outcome of the policy, though some schools may not face it as severely. Despite the increase in student numbers, 169 (53.3%) agreed and 53 (16.7%) strongly agreed that their schools continue to run programs efficiently. However, 67 (21.1%) strongly disagreed, 15 (4.7%) disagreed, and 13 (4.1%) were neutral. This suggests that while many schools maintain operational efficiency, a significant proportion encounter challenges due to the higher enrolment.

Regarding access to facilities such as laboratories and libraries, a large majority, 238 (75.1%) agreed and 24 (7.6%) strongly agreed that access has become more limited. Only 27 (8.5%) strongly disagreed, 16 (5.0%) disagreed, and 12 (3.8%) were neutral, reflecting that infrastructural resources have been overstretched under the policy. Responses on the school's ability to expand resources were mixed. About 83 (26.2%) agreed and 40 (12.6%) strongly agreed that schools have expanded resources to accommodate the increased enrolment. Conversely, 159 (50.2%) strongly disagreed, 20 (6.3%) disagreed, and 15 (4.7%) were neutral, indicating that many schools still struggle to meet the demands of higher student numbers. This shows that while some schools have successfully expanded resources, many continue to struggle with limited facilities.

Admission processes under the 100% transition policy were generally well regarded. Most respondents, 217 (68.5%) strongly agreed and 60 (18.9%) agreed that the processes are well-organized. Only 10 (3.2%) strongly disagreed, 19 (6.0%) disagreed, and 11 (3.5%) were neutral, showing a broad consensus that despite challenges such as overcrowding and limited resources, the admission procedures are effectively managed. During the interview, individual respondents who participated in this study were asked how implementation of the one hundred percent transition policy affects access to secondary education in Nyandarua County and they gave their views as follows:

Increased student enrolment resulting from the 100% transition policy has exerted pressure on existing school infrastructure across Nyandarua County. Many schools lack adequate classroom space, with some institutions forced to convert libraries, laboratories, and staffrooms into makeshift learning areas to accommodate the growing number of students. Overcrowded classrooms compromise the quality of instruction, limit student engagement, and strain available learning resources (Interview, 2025).

Teacher shortage has emerged as another key challenge following the policy's implementation. With the influx of learners into secondary schools, the existing teaching staff is overwhelmed, leading to high number of students that hinder personalized instruction. Teachers always reported difficulty in managing large classes, especially in delivering lessons effectively, assessing students promptly, and addressing individual learning needs, particularly in rural and under-resourced schools (Interview, 2025).

Financial constraints continue to affect many families despite the policy's aim of universal secondary education. Although tuition fees are subsidized, parents still shoulder the burden of hidden costs such as uniforms, transport, lunch programs, and boarding fees. Some students, particularly those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, risk missing school or dropping out due to the inability to meet these supplementary costs, undermining the policy's intended inclusivity (Interview, 2025).

These findings are consistent with the literature reviewed. Studies by Wangari (2019) in Murang'a East District and Ellen (2021) across African countries both concluded that structured transition policies play a pivotal role in improving access to secondary education. Similarly, Rhiannon et al. (2022) in the UK and Mughal (2020) in Pakistan reported that inclusive education policies foster greater educational continuity and minimize dropout rates. In addition, Otieno and Ochieng (2020) in their study in Machakos county explored coping strategies amid the surge in secondary school enrolment, implying that schools are overloaded and under-resourced due to the 100 % transition. Kazakhstan (2023) in Ghana reported that Free Senior High School Policy led to an unexpected jump in enrolment, straining infrastructure and teacher resources. Initial performance dipped, but later improvements occurred after implementing a double-track system that eased congestion. Though not Kenyan, this study provides a valuable comparative perspective. It illustrates how a similar policy caused infrastructure strain and how strategic reforms (double-tracking) can restore learning quality. It underscores the universality of the issue and suggests solutions that might inform Kenyan policy adaptation. Thus, the present study affirms prior research, demonstrating that the 100% transition policy has enhanced access and educational continuity; though it also underscores the pressing need to address resource constraints to sustain quality learning outcomes. Document analysis supported these findings, showing that most schools experienced a steady rise in enrolment between 2020 and 2024. For example, School 4 increased from 320 to 450 students, while School 17 doubled from 80 to 180 within the same period. These upward trends indicate that more learners are successfully making the transition from primary to secondary education, which aligns with the core objective of the policy ensuring that no child is left behind after completing primary school. This indicates that access has indeed been widened. However, such growth has intensified pressure on infrastructure and teaching staff, making it harder for schools to operate efficiently without additional government support. Interestingly, some schools such as School 1 recorded a decline in enrolment, suggesting that efficiency challenges linked to inadequate infrastructure or poor retention may discourage sustained access.

One Hundred Percent Transition Policy on Retention to Public Secondary School

The second study question provided the framework for the analysis; it aimed to determine the impact of the 100% transition policy on student retention in Nyandarua County. Using a Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), students were asked to rate how much they agreed with several assertions about student retention. Findings were presented in Table 3

Table 3: Response on Access to Public Secondary School n=317

Statements	Strongly Disagree F (%)	Disagree F (%)	Neutral F (%)	Agreed F (%)	Strongly Agree F (%)
The 100% transition policy has reduced student dropout rates in my school.	15 (4.7%)	30 (9.5%)	40 (12.6%)	120 (37.9%)	112 (35.3%)
Most students complete all academic terms after admission.	20 (6.3%)	35 (11.0%)	38 (12.0%)	115 (36.3%)	109 (34.4%)

Statements	Strongly Disagree F (%)	Disagree F (%)	Neutral F (%)	Agreed F (%)	Strongly Agree F (%)
Retention is supported through guidance and counseling services.	18 (5.7%)	28 (8.8%)	45 (14.2%)	110 (34.7%)	116 (36.6%)
Cases of absenteeism have increased due to higher student numbers.	22 (6.9%)	25 (7.9%)	30 (9.5%)	125 (39.4%)	115 (36.3%)
Retention has improved school performance and stability.	25 (7.9%)	40 (12.6%)	42 (13.2%)	105 (33.1%)	105 (33.1%)
The school has put in place measures to ensure students stay in school.	16 (5.0%)	22 (6.9%)	35 (11.0%)	130 (41.0%)	114 (36.0%)
Retaining more students has overstretched available resources.	12 (3.8%)	18 (5.7%)	25 (7.9%)	135 (42.6%)	127 (40.1%)

Source: Field Data (2025)

Table 3 shows that a majority of respondents, 112(35.3%) strongly agreed and 120(37.9%) agreed that the 100% transition policy has reduced student dropout rates in their schools. However, 15(4.7%) strongly disagreed, 30(9.5%) disagreed, while 40(12.6%) remained neutral on the statement. This indicates that while most respondents acknowledged the positive effects of the policy in retaining students, a smaller proportion did not perceive any significant reduction in dropouts. In response to whether most students complete all academic terms after admission, 109(34.4%) strongly agreed and 115(36.3%) agreed. On the other hand, 20(6.3%) strongly disagreed and 35(11.0%) disagreed, while 38(12.0%) remained neutral. This suggests that the majority of respondents felt that access to secondary education supports consistent term completion, although a few respondents highlighted challenges in ensuring all students complete their terms.

Regarding whether retention is supported through guidance and counseling services, a significant number of respondents, 116(36.6%) strongly agreed and 110(34.7%) agreed. Meanwhile, 18(5.7%) strongly disagreed and 28(8.8%) disagreed, while 45(14.2%) were neutral. This indicates that most schools provide psychosocial support mechanisms that help retain students, though a minority of respondents did not perceive this support as sufficient.

On the issue of absenteeism due to higher student numbers, 125(39.4%) agreed and 115(36.3%) strongly agreed that absenteeism has increased. Conversely, 22(6.9%) strongly disagreed and 25(7.9%) disagreed, while 30(9.5%) remained neutral. This shows that while increased enrollment enhances access, it also poses challenges in monitoring attendance, leading to higher absenteeism in some schools. With regard to whether retention has improved school performance and stability, 105(33.1%) strongly agreed and 105(33.1%) agreed. However, 25(7.9%) strongly disagreed and 40(12.6%) disagreed, while 42(13.2%) remained neutral. This suggests that retention is perceived to contribute positively to

academic performance and overall school stability, although some respondents noted that the impact may not be uniform across all schools.

When asked if schools have put in place measures to ensure students stay in school, 114(36.0%) strongly agreed and 130(41.0%) agreed. Only 16(5.0%) strongly disagreed, 22(6.9%) disagreed, while 35(11.0%) were neutral. This demonstrates that most schools implement proactive strategies, such as mentorship and monitoring, to maintain student enrollment.

Regarding whether retaining more students has overstretched available resources, 127(40.1%) strongly agreed and 135(42.6%) agreed. A small proportion, 12(3.8%) strongly disagreed and 18(5.7%) disagreed, while 25(7.9%) were neutral. This highlights that while increased access has been beneficial for retention, it has also strained physical and human resources, emphasizing the need for expansion and support to accommodate the growing student population. These findings suggested that while the 100% transition policy had generally improved student retention and completion rates, its effectiveness was sometimes limited by the preparedness and resource capacity of secondary schools in Nyandarua County. These results concur with Cheruiyot (2021), who found that although secondary schools had made efforts to implement the 100% transition policy, many faced infrastructural and staffing limitations that threatened sustained student retention. Similarly, Imbosa, Majanga, and Ouda (2022) emphasized that supportive policy like re-entry programs can enhance retention only if sufficient institutional support structures are in place. However, the concern raised by students in this study aligns with Boniface (2021), who noted that, poor support systems and limited teaching resources often lead to early dropout even after successful transition. During the interview a sample of qualitative interview responses from key respondents on the extent to which the implementation of the 100% transition policy has affected retention in secondary education in Nyandarua County were as follows:

“The 100% transition policy has increased initial enrolment, but maintaining those students through to Form Four has been a challenge. Many come from disadvantaged backgrounds, and once they’re in school, sustaining their stay becomes difficult. We have cases where students miss school for weeks due to lack of basic necessities like uniforms or lunch. While the policy opened the door, retention depends heavily on support systems that many schools and families lack” (Principal Interview; School A, May, 2025). “Retention rates have improved modestly due to the policy, but not to the same extent as enrolment. We’ve seen a significant drop-off by the end of form two in some sub-counties. The key issue is that transition alone isn’t enough; students must be supported to stay in school. We need stronger follow-up mechanisms and more targeted bursaries, particularly for orphans and vulnerable children” (Respondent 2 Interview, May, 2025).

One Hundred Percent Transition Policy on Class Size and School Efficiency

This section explored the perceptions of students regarding the influence of the 100% transition policy on class size; findings are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Response on 100% Transition Policy and Class Size n=317

Statements	Strongly Disagree F (%)	Disagree F (%)	Neutral F (%)	Agreed F (%)	Strongly Agreed F (%)
The 100% transition policy has increased the number of students per class.	10 (3.2%)	25 (7.9%)	30 (9.5%)	140 (44.2%)	112 (35.3%)
The available classrooms are adequate to accommodate all students.	25 (7.9%)	45 (14.2%)	40 (12.6%)	120 (37.9%)	87 (27.4%)
Overcrowded classes make it difficult to learn effectively.	15 (4.7%)	20 (6.3%)	35 (11.0%)	125 (39.4%)	122 (38.5%)
Teachers manage large classes effectively.	30 (9.5%)	35 (11.0%)	40 (12.6%)	120 (37.9%)	92 (29.0%)
Classroom space is a major challenge in ensuring quality learning.	20 (6.3%)	30 (9.5%)	35 (11.0%)	130 (41.0%)	102 (32.2%)
The school has created new learning spaces to cope with increased numbers.	12 (3.8%)	25 (7.9%)	30 (9.5%)	145 (45.7%)	105 (33.1%)
Class size has affected student participation and attention in lessons.	8 (2.5%)	20 (6.3%)	25 (7.9%)	140 (44.2%)	124 (39.1%)

Source: Field Data (2025)

Table 4 shows that a majority of respondents, 112(35.3%) strongly agreed and 140(44.2%) agreed that the 100% transition policy has increased the number of students per class. Only 10(3.2%) strongly disagreed and 25(7.9%) disagreed, while 30(9.5%) remained neutral. This indicates that most students perceive a significant rise in class sizes due to the policy. Regarding the adequacy of classrooms, 87(27.4%) strongly agreed and 120(37.9%) agreed that classrooms are sufficient, while 25(7.9%) strongly disagreed and 45(14.2%) disagreed, with 40(12.6%) neutral. This suggests that a considerable number of schools struggle to provide enough classrooms for all students.

On whether overcrowding affects learning, 122(38.5%) strongly agreed and 125(39.4%) agreed, with only 15(4.7%) strongly disagreeing and 20(6.3%) disagreeing, while 35(11.0%) were neutral. This highlights that overcrowding is widely acknowledged as a barrier to effective learning. For teachers' ability to manage large classes, 92(29.0%) strongly agreed and 120(37.9%) agreed, compared to 30(9.5%) strongly disagreeing and 35(11.0%) disagreeing, with 40(12.6%) neutral. This implies that while teachers are generally coping, a notable portion of respondents perceive challenges in class management. With respect to classroom space as a challenge to quality learning, 102(32.2%) strongly agreed and 130(41.0%) agreed, while 20(6.3%) strongly disagreed and 30(9.5%) disagreed, with 35(11.0%) neutral. This indicates that space constraints remain a significant concern in maintaining learning quality.

On the creation of new learning spaces, 105(33.1%) strongly agreed and 145(45.7%) agreed, compared to 12(3.8%) strongly disagreeing and 25(7.9%) disagreeing, with 30(9.5%) neutral. This shows that many schools are taking proactive measures to expand learning spaces. Regarding class size affecting student participation and attention, 124(39.1%) strongly agreed and 140(44.2%) agreed, while only 8(2.5%) strongly disagreed and 20(6.3%) disagreed, with 25(7.9%) neutral. This demonstrates that increased class sizes significantly impact student engagement during lessons.

The findings indicate that the 100% transition policy has successfully increased access to secondary education, but has also led to overcrowding, stretched classroom resources, and challenges in student participation. Schools are attempting to create new learning spaces, but additional support may be required to maintain quality learning outcomes. Researcher further sought the opinion of the respondents on the effects of the 100% transition policy on class size and space in public secondary school in Nyandarua County, using key respondents such as principals and the County Director of Education representatives:

“The implementation of the 100% transition policy has led to a sharp increase in student enrolment. While this is a positive step for education access, it has significantly affected the available space in schools. Classrooms that once accommodated around 30 students are now holding over 50 students per class, which has a negative impact on the quality of education. Overcrowding has made it difficult for teachers to provide individualized attention. For instance, in subjects that require more practical engagement, like science, the lack of laboratory space and equipment is a critical issue. The physical space in classrooms, as well as the limited availability of desks and chairs, has compounded the problem. We are struggling with how to deliver lessons effectively in such cramped conditions” (Respondent 1 Interview, May, 2025).

“From the county's perspective, the policy has certainly increased the number of students transitioning to secondary education, but there has been a clear strain on school infrastructure. Many schools were not prepared for such high enrolment figures, particularly in terms of physical space. Some schools have been forced to create makeshift classrooms by converting libraries, staffrooms, and even outdoor spaces into learning areas. The increase in class size has resulted in less conducive learning environments, and this, in turn, can affect retention rates. For example, larger class sizes are linked to increased student dropout rates because many students feel neglected due to the lack of personalized attention. The space issue is one we are addressing through minor infrastructural improvements, but it's a significant challenge” (Interview, May, 2025).

The study therefore concluded that the implementation of the 100% transition policy has significantly influenced class size and space utilization in secondary schools in Nyandarua County. While the policy has succeeded in expanding access to education, it has concurrently created infrastructural and spatial challenges that require urgent policy attention and resource allocation to ensure that quality education is not compromised. The findings echo the concerns and observations raised by various scholars in the literature, underscoring the need for strategic planning, infrastructure development, and increased investment to make the policy sustainable and effective.

One Hundred Percent Transition Policy on Student-Teacher Ratio and School Efficiency

This section presents findings of how the effective implementation of the one hundred percent transition policy as regards to student-teacher ratios influences public secondary schools' efficiency in Nyandarua County. Findings are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Response on 100% Transition Policy and Student–Teacher Ratio n=317

Statements	Strongly Disagree F (%)	Disagree F (%)	Neutral F (%)	Agreed F (%)	Strongly Agreed F (%)
The number of teachers is sufficient to handle the increased student population.	18 (5.7%)	40 (12.6%)	35 (11.0%)	140 (44.2%)	84 (26.5%)
Teachers are overstretched due to high student–teacher ratios.	10 (3.2%)	20 (6.3%)	28 (8.8%)	135 (42.6%)	124 (39.1%)
Teachers provide adequate attention to individual student needs.	22 (6.9%)	35 (11.0%)	40 (12.6%)	130 (41.0%)	90 (28.4%)
High student–teacher ratios have led to reduced academic performance.	12 (3.8%)	18 (5.7%)	30 (9.5%)	145 (45.7%)	112 (35.3%)
Teachers manage time effectively despite the increased workload.	25 (7.9%)	40 (12.6%)	38 (12.0%)	125 (39.4%)	89 (28.1%)
The government has posted more teachers to balance the student–teacher ratio.	20 (6.3%)	28 (8.8%)	42 (13.2%)	130 (41.0%)	97 (30.6%)
Large student–teacher ratios have lowered the quality of feedback given to students.	15 (4.7%)	25 (7.9%)	30 (9.5%)	140 (44.2%)	107 (33.8%)

Source: Field Data (2025)

Table 5 shows that a majority of respondents, 140(44.2%) agreed and 84(26.5%) strongly agreed that the number of teachers is sufficient to handle the increased student population. However, 18(5.7%) strongly disagreed and 40(12.6%) disagreed, while 35(11.0%) remained neutral. This indicates that while some schools have enough teachers, others face challenges in coping with rising student numbers. Regarding whether teachers are overstretched due to high student–teacher ratios, 124(39.1%) strongly agreed and 135(42.6%) agreed, compared to 10(3.2%) strongly disagreeing and 20(6.3%) disagreeing, with 28(8.8%) neutral. This shows that high student–teacher ratios are a significant challenge for teachers. On whether teachers provide adequate attention to individual students, 90(28.4%) strongly agreed and 130(41.0%) agreed, while 22(6.9%) strongly disagreed and 35(11.0%) disagreed, with 40(12.6%) neutral. This suggests that despite large class sizes, most teachers attempt to address individual student needs, although attention may still be limited.

Regarding whether high student–teacher ratios have led to reduced academic performance, 112(35.3%) strongly agreed and 145(45.7%) agreed, with 12(3.8%) strongly disagreeing and 18(5.7%) disagreeing, while 30(9.5%) remained neutral. This implies that increased ratios are widely perceived to negatively affect students’ academic outcomes.

On teachers’ time management, 125(39.4%) agreed and 89(28.1%) strongly agreed that teachers manage time effectively despite the increased workload. However, 25(7.9%) strongly disagreed and 40(12.6%) disagreed, with 38(12.0%) neutral. This indicates that while teachers make efforts to handle workload efficiently, challenges persist due to larger classes. Concerning government efforts to post more teachers, 97(30.6%) strongly agreed and 130(41.0%) agreed, compared to 20(6.3%) strongly disagreeing and 28(8.8%) disagreeing, with 42(13.2%) neutral. This shows that many respondents recognize government intervention in posting additional teachers, though gaps remain.

Regarding the effect of large student–teacher ratios on feedback quality, 107(33.8%) strongly agreed and 140(44.2%) agreed, while 15(4.7%) strongly disagreed and 25(7.9%) disagreed, with 30(9.5%) neutral. This demonstrates that larger ratios negatively affect the quality of feedback teachers can provide. The findings indicate that the 100% transition policy has increased access to secondary schools but has significantly strained the student–teacher ratio. While teachers attempt to manage workload and provide attention to students, high ratios are perceived to reduce academic performance and the quality of feedback, highlighting a need for more teacher recruitment and support. These findings are consistent with studies by Darling-Hammond and Carver-Thomas (2019), who found that expanded enrolment policies without corresponding increases in teacher numbers lead to increased workloads, reduced interaction quality, and poorer academic performance. The findings also align with Otieno and Ochieng (2020), who reported that inadequate administrative response exacerbates the challenges associated with mass transition policies. Similarly, research from Santiago, Chile (2022), and Margaret (2020) highlight the need for systemic planning in policy implementation to avoid overstretched resources and compromised education quality.

In this study, comprehensive qualitative response based on insights from key respondents’ representatives was conducted and the findings were as follows:

“The implementation of the 100% transition policy has resulted in a substantial rise in student enrolment without a corresponding increase in the number of teachers. As a result, the student-teacher ratio has widened significantly. In our school, for instance, the average ratio used to be 1:30, but now it has increased to approximately 1:50 or more, especially in lower classes like Form two and Form three. This situation has made it very difficult for teachers to manage their classrooms effectively. Teachers are overworked, and their ability to provide individual attention to students has been severely compromised. This affects not only academic performance but also learner discipline and classroom engagement” (Interview, May, 2025).

“One of the most pressing challenges we’ve observed since the rollout of the 100% transition policy is the sharp imbalance in the student-teacher ratio, particularly in rural and sub-county schools. The policy led to a surge in student numbers, yet teacher recruitment and deployment have lagged behind. Some schools report handling over 60 students per class with only one teacher, especially in core subjects like Mathematics, English, and Kiswahili. This ratio is far beyond the recommended national average. The Ministry is aware of this disparity and has initiated efforts to hire more teachers through the Teachers Service Commission, but budgetary

constraints have limited the extent of deployment. The policy, while commendable in terms of equity, is straining human resources in the education sector” (Interview, May, 2025).

This study agrees with Jasper Ondimu (2021), who laments that “learners may not be attended to in a more personal way,” as classes swell to 90 students, far surpassing the recommended 40 per class, and dormitories built for 600 are now sheltering more than 2,000 learners. In a systematic study, Otieno and Ochieng (2020) report that principals in Machakos Sub-County experienced “constraints on physical infrastructure, increased teacher-student ratio and overstretched student support programmes,” leading schools to resort to coping strategies, and the authors recommend strengthening public–private partnerships.

1.8 Conclusion

The study deduced that the implementation of the 100% transition policy in Nyandarua County significantly increased student enrolment in public secondary schools, thereby expanding access to education. However, this growth has placed considerable pressure on existing school infrastructure, leading to overcrowded classrooms, limited learning spaces, and challenges in teacher-student interaction. Practical subjects, such as science, were particularly affected due to inadequate laboratory facilities, while many schools had to convert non-instructional areas into classrooms. These challenges negatively affected the quality of instruction, student engagement, and overall learning outcomes.

1.9 Recommendation

In response to these findings, school administrators are advised to adopt innovative strategies to manage large class sizes, including reorganizing classrooms, creating temporary learning structures, and implementing flexible scheduling, such as double shifts, to reduce congestion. Teachers should be supported through professional development and additional teaching aids to maintain effective lesson delivery under these conditions; The Ministry of Education, together with county governments, needs to prioritize investment in school infrastructure by constructing additional classrooms, laboratories, and sanitation facilities to accommodate the growing student population; In addition, policy frameworks should be strengthened to ensure that schools receive adequate support to manage the effects of increased enrollment. By combining infrastructural expansion, policy reinforcement, and practical classroom management strategies, all stakeholders can ensure that the gains in educational access from the 100% transition policy are matched by improvements in educational quality and student outcomes.

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