

**EMERGING CHALLENGES FOR EDUCATIONAL PLANNERS AND
OTHER STAKEHOLDERS IN RETENTION OF STUDENTS IN
SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KILOME DIVISION, MAKUENI
DISTRICT**

BY

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ABSTRACT

This study set out to investigate the challenges facing educational planners and other stakeholders in the retention of students in public secondary schools in Kilome Division of Makueni District. The study covered the whole of Kilome Division and dealt with four groups of people who were perceived as important stakeholders in education. This division was selected because the researcher had worked there as a teacher and had noticed the dropout rates which were high.

The area was also chosen because it exhibits the most profound characteristics of the phenomenon under study with an average dropout of three (3) students per year per school.

The sample size consisted of 10 headteachers, 10 guidance and counselling teachers, 24 parents of the dropouts and 24 dropouts.

Random sampling was used to select the headteachers and guidance and counselling teachers. Snowballing technique was used to select the dropouts and the parents.

Through self-administered questionnaires and an interview schedule, the study elicited views and opinions on the challenges facing educational planners and other stakeholders in retention of students in secondary schools in Kilome Division. The data collected was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The results were quantified using tables showing frequencies and percentages.

The study had some major findings. These included the fact that the challenges facing educational planners and other stakeholders in retention of students in school emanated from social, school and home factors.

The study also found that parents' lack of awareness of government policy on certain important issues related to education was a cause of lack of retention of students in schools.

The study also revealed that some of the factors which led to dropout emanated from the students themselves while others such as pregnancy while in school were caused by social issues.

The school environment was also found to contribute to lack of retention of students in school. The factors which came out prominently as mitigating against retention of students in school included girls' pregnancy, lack of policy on promotion of students to the next class and the education level of the parents.

The study also solicited for suggestions from the respondents on the way forward. Suggestions such as creation of awareness among the parents on government policy on issues like the role of the parents in the education of their children, revision of school policy on suspension, expulsion and corporal punishment and the formulation of rules and policies on readmission of girls after giving birth were given.

The study recommends that:

1. All the stakeholders should be sensitised on the importance of retention of students in school.
2. Awareness should be created among both the students and parents on the importance of completion of secondary education.
3. That the government should take off the burden of school fees from the parents so that students do not dropout of school due to lack of school fees.

4. Rules on readmission of girls who get pregnant in school should be made clear to all stakeholders.
5. Guidance and counselling should be extended to both parents and students so that there can be an understanding between students, parents and teachers on the issues of education.
6. There is need for further government intervention to ensure that government policies on education are implemented. Consistent follow-up should ensure that students are retained in school.
7. Free primary education is not enough. The same poor primary school pupil should be offered free secondary education if access to education for all is to be equalised. Furthermore, the research has revealed that being aware of government policies on education is not enough. It is therefore anticipated that the students will otherwise get back to school.

The study had the following suggestions for further study owing to its delimitation to Kilome Division of Makueni District:

1. A similar study should be carried out elsewhere on the same issue to elicit more accurate information.
2. There is need to carry out a study on the perception of educational planners on the readmission of dropouts to school.
3. There is need to carry out a study on the attitude of continuing students on the readmission of dropouts to school.