

**THE INFLUENCE OF FREE PRIMARY EDUCATION ON THE  
PUPILS RETENTION RATE: THE CASE OF GATANGA  
DISTRICT, MURANGA COUNTY, KENYA**

**BY**

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**A PROJECT REPORT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF  
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF DEGREE OF MASTER OF  
ARTS IN PROJECT PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT OF THE  
UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI**

**JULY 2016**

## DECLARATION

This project is my original work and has not been presented for an award of a degree, diploma or certificate in any university.

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to my wonderful family: To my husband Allan Wekesa for his understanding and support that saw me through this work and my children, Angelah and Basil for their love and sacrifice. I would like to thank my parents Mr. Eliud Mathu Muiruri and Mrs. Zipporah Mathu for allowing me to follow my ambitions and for being my inspiration and motivation in moving my career forward and improving my knowledge.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I highly acknowledge the professional guidance and support I received from my supervisor, Prof. Christopher Mwangi Gakuu. He offered tireless effort which saw me through my research work as he always insisted on quality. This has taught me that with determination, passion, and above all God's guidance and strength all things are possible. I give many thanks to the lecturers who dedicated their time to give us the needed knowledge during the entire period. I am indebted to the University of Nairobi for giving me the chance and opportunity to further my studies.

My Head of Department, Prof. Godfrey Muriuki, the Special Student Advisor, University of Nairobi, played a very significant role in ensuring that I got the time off the busy work schedule to work on this research project. I am indebted to my siblings Cornelius Mathu and Eunice Mathu, for their encouragement and support.

I give all the Glory to my heavenly Father God for Almighty God for giving me good health, the patience to complete the program, all the nice people I interacted with, and all His abundant provisions without which I could not have accomplished a thing. This work would not have been possible without the valuable input of many people who I cannot enlist here, but their contribution is highly valued.

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## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ATWS	Association of Third World Studies Kenya Chapter
DEB	District Educational Board
DQAS	Department of Quality Assurance and Standards
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EFA	Education For All
FPE	Free Primary Education
GER	Gross Enrollment Ratio
GNP	Gross National Product
GoK	Government of Kenya
KESSP	Kenya Education Sector Support Programme
KNEC	Kenya National Examinations Council
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoE&HRD -	Ministry of Education & Human Resource Development
MoEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
NARC	National Rainbow Coalition Party
QASOs	Quality Assurance and Standards Officers
RoK	Republic of Kenya
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
TIQUET	Totally Integrated Quality Education & Training
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Education Fund
UPE	Universal Primary Education
ZIS	Zonal Inspector of Schools

## ABSTRACT

The overall purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of free primary education funding on the pupils' retention rate, in Gatanga District, Murang'a County, Kenya. The specific objectives were to assess how provision of physical facilities influence pupils' retention rate; to establish to what extent provision of school equipment influence pupils' retention rate; and to determine in what ways does provision of services influence pupils' retention rate. Hence the study sought to answer the following research questions: how does the provision of physical facilities influence pupils' retention rate; to what extent does the provision of school equipment influence pupils' retention rate; and in what ways does the provision of services influence pupils' retention rate? In order to answer these questions thus achieve the objectives, the study adopted an ex-post-facto descriptive survey design. The study targeted public primary schools in Kenya, focusing on Murang'a County, specifically Gatanga District. The study used the Gatanga District list of primary schools as the sampling frame to determine the size of the sample to include in the study and the procedure of arriving at the sample. A total of 32 primary schools were involved. Two main methods of data collection were used; document review and survey questionnaires.

On physical facilities provision, most of the Headteachers strongly agreed that availability of classrooms, latrines, workshops and playground respectively affected pupils' retention rate. In addition, 50% of headmasters agreed that availability of workshops influenced pupils' retention in schools. Further, 57.1% agreed that availability of latrines influenced primary school pupils' retention. On materials and equipment 57.1% of guidance and counseling teachers agreed that availability of text books contributed to higher levels of retention. On the other hand, 50% of the Headteachers strongly agreed that having desks and text books contributes to retention of pupils in school. Likewise, more than half of the class teachers agree that having textbooks and ICT infrastructure materials contributed to retention. On services provision, the study's findings indicate that 71.4% of the guidance and counseling masters strongly agree that availability of funds to cater for school activities transport and wages for support staff has contributed in pupils' retention in school. In addition, about 50.0% of the Headteachers strongly agreed that waiving the student fees on transport and wages for support staff contributes to retention of pupils in school.

The study results had implications on the need to reform the education policy in the country. It was recommended that first, the government should increase the funds allocated for FPE so that retention rates for pupils in public primary schools can be increased. Second, quality assurance officers in Gatanga should be more vibrant in supervising the management of public primary schools as well as the administration of the curriculum. Third, schools in Gatanga should strengthen their guidance and counseling departments which play a key role in keeping pupils in school despite the challenges brought about by the shortcomings of FPE. For further research, similar studies could be replicated elsewhere in other parts of the country and a study could be carried to find out whether there is a relationship between the lack of guidance and counseling and the rising dropout rates in Gatanga District.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1. Background of the Study

Universal Primary Education (UPE) is an issue that entered the global scene several decades ago. Prior to the adoption of the idea globally, different countries of the world had their own reforms, practices and plans for their education systems. Moreover, it was not until the Global Education Forums of 1990s that the idea was conventionally agreed upon (Wasanga, 2004). After the Dakar Forum, 164 governments who had attended agreed to achieve Education for All (EFA) by the year 2015. In order to coordinate this, the Dakar Framework for Action mandated UNESCO to coordinate new movement, aided by the following other conveners of the Dakar Forum: UNICEF, UNFPA, World Bank and the UNDP.

The EFA movement has six goals. According to Avenstrup, Liang and Nellemann (2004), these goals included: expanding early childhood education, ensure that by 2015, all children had access to free and compulsory primary education, ensuring that the learning needs of young people were met, ensuring that there was at least 50% improvement in adult literacy levels by 2015, doing away with gender disparities in primary education and improving the quality of primary education in the aspect. Oumer (Wasanga, 2004) observes that these goals were to be achieved through the following activities: advocacy, policy dialogue, capacity development, funding mobilization and monitoring.

Later adoption of Free Primary Education (FPE) by individual countries, especially in Africa, was either due to this global push or as a continuation of their past efforts (Ogola, 2010). Regionally, different countries are at different levels of FPE planning, adoption or implementation. Avenstrup, Liang and Nellemann (2004) studied FPE in four African countries: Kenya, Lesotho, Uganda and Malawi. They uncovered some contextual similarities in the way FPE was introduced and is managed in those countries. In Malawi, Kenya and Lesotho, FPE was introduced as an election issue. In all the countries, there was no fiscal discipline hence the delivery of the education was compromised. Efforts in Malawi started in 1991, but FPE was launched in 1994. Uganda had started the drive towards UPE in 1987, but it was only possible in

1997. Although FPE was in the Lesotho constitution, it was not implemented until 2000, due to political instability. In Kenya, it was introduced in 2003. Oumer (2004) also studied Ethiopia's FPE program and established that the drive was started in 1970s when the National Democratic Revolution of Ethiopia expressed its wish to entrench FPE. In 1994, Ethiopia abolished the payment of school fees by children in grades 1 to 10.

The concept of FPE was introduced in the minds of Kenyans in 2002 during the campaigns for the general elections (Gakure, Mukuria & Kithae, 2013; Ogola, 2010). During their campaigns, the National Rainbow Coalition Party (NARC) promised Kenyans that if elected into power, they would ensure that no Kenyan child stayed at home due to the lack of money to pay for basic education. After the NARC government came into power, FPE was introduced in 2003. Prior to the introduction of FPE, the enrolment rate to primary schools was very low. Hence this was an opportunity by many Kenyan parents to take their children to school. As a result, the response was so overwhelming that many primary school head teachers enrolled pupils beyond their capacities. It was simply not possible for the heads of the schools to admit everybody, bearing in mind that the government did not give any age limit of those who were supposed to go and enroll. Many parents were turned away since there were no spaces in schools to accommodate their children. They were very disappointed and kept on moving from one schools to the next in the hope that they would get a slot in any of the schools.

It was presumed that FPE would guarantee access to universal basic education, relevance, high quality and equity in Kenya (Shampanier, Mazar & Ariely, 2007). By coincidence, the Children's Act which was passed in 2001 provided that every Kenyan child has a right to education (Mukudi, 2004). Due to the two forces, the Children's Act and the campaign promise, the NARC government through the then Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) drew up a framework for the implementation of the FPE. The government was expected to provide the minimum facilities and resources so that they could go through the eight years of primary school education without interruption. The Ministry had a responsibility to ensure that all the schools had the required materials such as writing materials for children and chalks and see to it that all levies were abolished. The Economic Recovery Strategy for Wealth and Employment Creation Paper (2003-2007) had pointed out that the greatest challenge in

Kenya was inequality. The government established that the poor were generally less educated hence less skilled. As a result, they could not compete on equal grounds with the rich, who were generally more educated and skilled. Despite its later challenges, the FPE program was based on the right intentions.

The result of the introduction of FPE was as expected. There was a record increase in primary school enrolment rate by 10 per cent. According to RoK (2003), enrolment increased by 1.3 million from 5.9 million in 2002 to 7.2 million in 2003 for both public and private public schools. For public primary schools, enrolment increased by 17.6 per cent from 5,874,776 in 2002 to 6,906,355 in 2003. For the same one-year-period, enrolment in private public schools increased from 187,966 to 253,169, a 34.7 percent increase. There were also significant regional differences. For instance, the Rift Valley province registered the highest level of enrolment rate followed by Eastern then Nyanza province. This could have been an indicator of levels of historical deprivation and socio-economic marginalization (Somerset, 2009).

One thing is clear, that the FPE policy, though a good idea, started as political agenda and there were not prior preparations. According to Gakure, Mukuria and Kithae (2013), the school head teachers and district educational officers were caught unawares, having ended the previous year without any notification that there was need for institutional preparations. Although the policy increased the participation in primary school education, it has created serious challenges that academics and policy analysis have well documented. In spite of all the challenges, the policy has also had its positive sides. It appears that many of the reports and analyses on the same focus on either the successes or the challenges. It is important that another study offers a balanced view of the same at a localized study site.

## **1.2. Statement of the Problem**

FPE was designed to help Kenyan children of the school-going age, which according to the Republic of Kenya (RoK) is 6-15 years, and adults aged 16 years and above, who did not have go to any school, to access the primary education. Since many of them had been locked out of the educational system owing to the cost involved then, the response was so overwhelming that the infrastructure then could not handle the increased numbers. According to Wasanga (2004) and Sawamura and Sifuna (2008), the teachers became overwhelmed and somewhat indifferent



about making any impact in such an environment. Further, the supervisors of curriculum implementation also did not know what to do. Ogola (2010) further observes that the government allocation of funds was so limited that the schools could not expand their facilities to accommodate more children. The problem was further compounded by the fact that the government was not in a position to hire the right number of teacher to meet the demand. Since that time, the equilibrium has never been arrived in terms of the teacher-pupils ratio.

Since the RoK pushed for the right of every Kenyan child to have universal basic education, it could not put age restrictions for those who were to attend school. As a result, very old people decided to go back to school to receive the basic education. There was a case in Eldoret that attracted not only national but also international attention: a man aged 84 years went back to school. In the midst of all this, one thing remained apparent, that the quality of the education so obtained by the pupils in primary schools was not the best (Mugo, 2006). This fact has been very conspicuous at the national level. For instance, recent survey showed that a good number of pupils in class seven could not tackle basic arithmetic for class two. There also exists massive evidence that in general, private schools perform better than public schools (Gakure, Mukuria & Kithae, 2013; Mukudi, 2004; Kairu, 2010). Since the challenges that were there at the very moment of inception still persist to-date, this has led to the speculation that perhaps FPE has not made any impact in the Kenyan society. Specifically, there is need to investigate the impact at the local levels since the national picture may overshadow the real benefits of FPE at the micro-level. It is on this basis that a district level study will be carried out to establish the real picture on the ground.

A study carried out in 2013 by Gakure, Mukuria and Kithae sought to establish the factors that caused poor performance in Gatanga district public primary schools. Despite the government's effort to fund the free primary education, as well as the Gatanga constituency development fund to support the local schools, Gatanga district public primary have continued to perform dismally. According to Gakure, Mukuria and Kithae (2013), the district has consistently been ranked the last for the last eight years (as at 2013) in the wider Thika. Past studies have already established the determinants of performance in Gatanga district public primary schools. Some of these determinants are poverty, unemployment, excessive consumption of local brews and

insecurity. Elsewhere, Odhiambo (2009), although he admits that absenteeism and missing classes is a major contributor to poor performance, faults the government in its poor supervision efforts and the schools in their ineffective management practices.

Other studies such as Gakure, Mukuria and Kithae (2013) have shown stark contrast between different regions of Kenya in as far as FPE is concerned. The most striking characteristic in this study is the levels of poverty in different regions. A SID report showed that Kiambu county has a total dependency ratio of 616 people per 1000. The rate is even higher for Gatanga. This has been occasioned by persistent levels of lack of education and other government services. This study thus seeks to investigate the effectiveness of government funding and supervision of free primary education in determining the performance of schools in the district.

### **1.3. Purpose of the Study**

The overall purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of free primary education funding on the pupils' retention rate, in Gatanga District, Murang'a County, Kenya.

### **1.4. Objectives of the Study**

- i. To assess how provision of physical facilities influence pupils retention rate.
- ii. To establish to what extent provision of school equipment influence pupils retention rate.
- iii. To determine in what ways does provision of services influence pupils retention rate.

### **1.5. Research Questions**

- i. How does the provision of physical facilities influence pupils' retention rate?
- ii. To what extent does the provision of school equipment influence pupils' retention rate?
- iii. In what ways does the provision of services influence pupils' retention rate?

### **1.6. Significance of the Study**

This study is important because of several reasons. First, there have been many studies at the national level regarding the factors that affect FPE program (Wanjohi, 2005). Unfortunately, most of the studies have been focusing on the negative side of the policy. Literature shows that FPE has really helped children from poor backgrounds to attain the basic education as required by the international community. Moreover, these benefits have not been adequately scientifically

studied at a local level. The study has contribute to the already existing knowledge on both positive and negative impacts of the FPE program. Second, the results from this study would provide important insights to the County Directors of Education regarding the needs of specific schools in the district that that require administrative action. It is hoped that important strategies would be adopted at the district levels to improve the competitiveness if the district, but more so to deliver the required quality of education. Last, the study has lead to the gathering of important information regarding not only the institutional but also personal characteristics of teachers that affect the performance of the pupils. This is based on the fact that government allocation per student in the entire allocation is constant, yet there exists differential performance of pupils across different counties.

### **1.7. Delimitation of the Study**

The scope of this study has been on the public primary schools in Gatanga District of Murang'a County. The study period was be between 2012 and 2014. Orodho (2005) argues that for any trend to be established, at least three data points, in this case the years, are required. Since allocation per student is constant, changes in performance could only indicate that there are other factors that influence education in primary schools within the district. Hence, the study will also focus on the following other aspects: the school administration, curriculum leadership and supervision, motivation and personality of individual teachers, number of pupils per class (or in the schools) and the like. In addition, it is important to note that focus was on the upper classes, such as standard six, seven and eight. Notably, the study covers the entire district of Gatanga.

### **1.8. Limitations of the Study**

The study was initially supposed to focus on the entire county, but due to limitations of time and resources, this was not possible. As a result, a smaller study site was selected for a detailed study instead of sampling many districts but carry out a superficial analysis. Moreover, the limitation in this could be the fact that results from one district cannot be generalized for the entire county. Second, all the data required for the study may not available. Hence, it was only possible to focus on fewer areas of investigation as opposed to the ideal detailed analysis based on all the relevant variables. Moreover, it is important to note that the limitations of the study has not significantly affected the validity and reliability of the current study. Necessary adjustments and gap filling

was carried out. Finally, there was no randomization as required in most quantitative studies, something that could be a potential threat to construct validity.

### **1.9. Assumptions of the Study**

Several assumptions has underlied this study. First, it is assumed that the government disbursement of funds in the study period was always timely. According to Mukudi (2004), delays in the disbursement of the monies required for public programs affects the performance of the programs. Second, it is assumed that there was no substantial migration of pupils from other districts into Gatanga, and that the numbers of pupils per class was not affected by rapid influxes. Such influxes are responsible for distorting the patterns and trends in a distribution (Singleton, 1993), hence are likely to affect the reliability of the results so-obtained.

### **1.10. Definitions of Significant Terms**

The following terms are defined within the context of the study.

**Physical facilities:** something designed, constructed, built or installed to serve a specific function in the schools.

**Equipment:** the tools or machines that are required to perform particular tasks in the schools.

**services:** these are intangible products provided to facilitate running of the schools.

**District:** A geographical area defined with a gazetted political boundary and comprises of a number of divisions, locations and sub-locations.

**Drop-out:** A person who has withdrawn prematurely from a defined educational programme.

**Enrolment:** Refers to the number of pupils who register as members of different grades at the beginning of the year.

**Repetition rates:** Percentages of pupils repeating a grade in a subsequent year.

**Retention:** The ability to retain pupils in school until the completion of a cycle.

**Primary school:** A learning institution that admits children who have met the minimum entry requirements for primary level education.

**Stakeholders:** People, institutions that are directly interested in the functioning of a school.

**Wastage:** Applies to those features in the education system that contribute to poor cost effectiveness, whereby pupils have to repeat a class or abandon a course before they complete it.

### **1.11. Organization of the Study**

The study was organized into five chapters, including the introduction. Literature Review explored past studies on the same matter in a bid to argue out own case for investigation. The chapter offered an overview of the FPE program at the national and local level (Gatanga), tracing its international origin, local political origin, its challenges and impact. In the same chapter, relevant characteristics of Gatanga district, which are related to educational attainment, were described. Thereafter, a theoretical framework, conceptual framework and knowledge gaps were delineated and a summary offered. Research Methodology presents the research design, population and sampling, methods of data collection, validity and reliability issues, methods of data analysis, definition of variables at the operational level and some of the ethical issues that have been considered. Data Analysis, Presentation and Interpretation was been done at two levels: descriptive and inferential levels. Presentation of the results has been done by use of tables. Interpretation was guided by whether the data was qualitative or quantitative or by the type of analysis method used. Summary, Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations seeked to summarize the entire study and its findings. It also drew conclusions from the findings so-obtained. Based on the findings and conclusions, relevant recommendations were made.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### **2.1. Introduction**

This chapter reviews existent literature on FPE in the various aspects that are being studied. It begins by offering an overview of FPE in Kenya and Gatanga. In order to achieve that, the international origin of universal education is glimpsed and the political dynamics surrounding its introduction in Kenya described. The overview also touches on the challenges that were faced after FPE was introduced in Kenya as well as the specific ones faced in Gatanga District of Murang'a County; hence an assessment of FPE aspects that affect academic performance at national and local levels scrutinized. After the overview, theoretical and conceptual frameworks are presented. Finally, the gaps in knowledge that emerge from the review are identified and a summary of the key issues in the review done.

#### **2.2. Overview of FPE in Kenya and Gatanga**

##### **2.2.1. International Origin**

Education plays a critical role in national development. This is a fact that is well known not only nationally but also internationally. Efforts to make primary education universal began several decades. According to Mugo (2006) those efforts appear to have borne fruits when, in 1990, Education For All (EFA) treaty was ratified in Jomtien, Thailand. It was also subsequently adopted in Senegal in 2002. In the same way, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) put education at the very center of global development. In fact, it is the first of all the eight goals, implying the importance of education for socio-economic development. The target was that by the year 2015, all the nations of the world must have adopted universal education for all. The indicator for this was to be the net enrolment ratio and the proportion of pupils who begin class 1 and complete class 8. These two origins, combined with the political dimension, were key to the introduction of FPE in Kenya.

### **2.2.2. Introduction of FPE in Kenya**

The introduction of FPE in Kenya, although had a political dimension, was aimed at achieving a very important aspect that was lacking in other educational regimes. However, according to Somerset (2009), before that is espoused, it is important that the goals of past educational regimes are reviewed. The goals of education in Kenya after independence are found in the Ominde Report of 1964. In 1971, these goals were emphasized in Ndegwa Report as follows: education must contribute to national development through promoting national unity, development of talent, promoting social equality and promoting the local cultures. The Kamunge Report of 1988 further expanded the list of goals, some of which were reformulations of the previous goals. These included fostering national unity, equipping youth with knowledge and skills, contributing to national development, development of talents and personality, promotion of social justice and fostering positive attitudes.

The Koech Report of 1999 revisited the historical development of the Kenyan education and expanded the goals in the light of Kenya's political and socio-economic changes. Most of the goals were a repletion of the earlier works except that Koech included enhancement of inter-personal and inter-ethnic relations, formation of personal character, articulation of the identity of Kenya in the global scene, respect for human dignity, creation of a life-long desire to learn, patriotism, respect of the dignity of the person and the conservation and maintenance of clean environment (Odhiambo, 2008).

The 2002 episode was not the first attempt to introduce FPE in Kenya. In 1971, President Kenyatta decreed that Kenya should adopt FPE, something that was accomplished by 1982. However, Mukudi (2004) notes that there were so many challenges that led to its downfall. First, there was not enough teachers to handle the increasing number of pupils. Second, there were no adequate classrooms as well as materials and other facilities. As a result, the move brought more confusion than its originally intended goals. The government then introduced a system of sharing the cost of education of the pupils with their parents, sponsors or guardians in 1988. The concept of *oharambee* was also introduced then, in which communities came together to raise funds for the sake of putting up educational structures such as classrooms.

### **2.2.3. Challenges Facing FPE in Kenya**

One of the leading challenges that faced the earlier and current programs of FPE was the inadequacy of resources to propel the achievement of the targets of education. First of all, Kenya as a developing nation has other problems such as diseases to grapple with. As a result, Gakure, Mukuria and Kithae (2013) observe, much resources are diverted to other spheres. Additionally, it was realized that there was a lot of corruption going on in the government circles as far as the procurement of the materials for FPE was concerned. As a result, one of the key donors of the FPE, Britain, withdrew its support for the program. The other challenges related to this are the question of costs and benefits. It is apparent that provision of high quality free primary education is indeed expensive. While the costs involved are high, the benefits are not immediate. In fact, if the beneficiaries of FPE do not transit to primary education and other levels of learning, it may become a total waste of resources. Further, if the beneficiaries indeed transit to the higher levels of education and they do not get jobs, there is no way they can pay back the back.

Even with the availability of free primary education, some parts of Kenya are so deprived that the pupils do not attend school. According to Wasanga (2004), in poor parts of Kenya, children would rather go to work in order to contribute to the provision of food, which would benefit all members of the family as opposed to education, which would benefit only one person (at least in their conception). The challenges are compounded by the unavailability of enough teachers. Although the pupils may turn up in large numbers, they may remain unattended. In such cases, the available teachers are so overwhelmed that they cannot offer the best they can or are supposed to. Hence the quality of education goes down. Further, the increased enrolment of pupils and limited funding from government has led to inadequacy of teaching and learning materials.

### **2.2.4. The Relationship between FPE Funding and pupils' retention rate**

Since the introduction of FPE, this area has been intensely studied. The provision of funds for FPE by the government has been associated with various practices that are directly linked to academic performance in Kenya's Public Primary Schools. According to Wasanga (2004), the major issue emanating from FPE and associated with academic performance is the hiring of teachers. He observes that the government has never recruited enough teachers to cater for the



huge numbers of pupils from poor backgrounds who went back to school after the FPE. In addition, the salaries paid to the teachers are not adequate to motivate them. Under FPE, the government is also supposed to provide the reference books and guides for the teachers. These have not been adequately provided.

Five years after Wasanga's study, it was realized that other than the hiring of teachers, there are related services that also contribute to the performance of teachers and, consequently, the academic performance of pupils. According to Somerset (2009), these include postage and mailing services, transport of teachers and wages for the other staffs who support the running of the schools. If the guides and reference materials mentioned above are not delivered in time, then the teachers are incapacitated to do their work. Other factors that contribute to the performance of pupils are discussed in Gakure, Mukuria and Kithae (2013). These include provision of physical facilities and provision of equipment and stationery. Physical facilities include things like classrooms, toilets, electricity and water. With the surging numbers of pupils, the existing facilities have been overwhelmed hence the need for increased funding to install more of those facilities. The following are classified as equipment and stationery: textbooks, radio sets, sports gears, sanitary towels, desks and materials for ICT infrastructure.

It emerges that there are more specific issues related to or emanating from FPE that influence the academic performance of public primary schools. The fact that the government took up the role implies that it is supposed to fund the operations of the schools. It was established that the government disburses funds for the above mentioned things (physical facilities, equipment and stationery, services and teachers) in two accounts: account 1 is for tuition and account 2 is the General Purpose Account (GPA). The above categorization is a conception of this study and will be made clearer in the conceptual framework. The elements under each category are the indicators used to measure the variable.

The tuition account includes textbooks and supplementary readers, textbooks maintenance, exercise books, teachers' guides and reference materials, stationery and assessment and examination. On the other hand, GPA includes support staff wages (SSW), renovation of classrooms, building of toilets, repairs, maintenance and improvement (RMI) of physical facilities, activity, local transport and travelling, electricity, water and conservancy (EWC),

telephone, box rental and postage, environment and sanitation, capacity building and meetings, contingencies such as sanitary towels, science and applied technology and ICT infrastructure materials. The contents of each account are well shown in the appendix. For each term, each pupils receives Kshs 500 for tuition account and Kshs 470 for GPA. It is on the basis of these allocations that all school operations are run hence impacting directly the quality of academic performance.

### **2.2.5. A Description of Gatanga**

Gatanga district is located in Gatanga Sub-County of Murang'a County. Other sub-counties of Murang'a are: Kiharu, Mathioya, Kangema, Kigumo, Kandara and Murang'a South sub-counties (Murang'a County Government, 2015). It lies in what used to be referred to as Central Province of Kenya in the previous system of government (provincial administration). The district is generally characterized by high rates of unemployment, unlike other districts in the county. There are also many instances of insecurity. According to the County government of Murang'a, the county has 1,080 early childhood development (ECD) centers whose total enrolment is 31,944 pupils who are served by 1,127 teachers. The county has 634 primary schools in which 109 of them come from Gatanga District. Notably, the student-teacher ratio in the district is lower than that of the county which is 1:34. In addition, the literacy rate of the district is lower than most of the districts in the county. The district is made up of 6 zones: Mitumbiri, Gatanga, Ithanga, Kakuzi, Kariara and Kihumbu-ini zones. Having more than 100 public primary schools that are lagging behind in education, Gatanga district requires closer focus in terms of research and policy.

The allocations discussed above have their own successes and failures if all other things are held constant. However, the challenges are exacerbated if there are other more pressing needs at the local level. As earlier mentioned, Gatanga is characterized by high levels of poverty (Gakure, Mukuria and Kithae, 2013). If poverty as a variable is added onto the model, academic performance in the district is affected more. A Society for International Development (SID) report for Murang'a Country showed that Gatanga had a total dependency ratio of above 70 per cent in which the youths were the leading contributed most to poverty. The same report also

showed that Gatanga was among the country districts with the highest number of people without any kind of work.

This study will consider academic performance for a three-year period from 2012 to 2014. Focus will be on classes 6, 7 and 8. This is because as Sawamura and Sifuna (2008) note, pupils in those classes are more aware of what education is all about hence their performance is least affected by factors related to failure to understand why they are in school.

#### **2.2.6. Pupils retention in schools**

During the 1960s and 1970s, there was a rapid expansion in primary school education largely following increased enrolment in primary schools. According to RoK (2006), student enrolment in primary and primary schools increased from 900,000 in primary to 7.4 million in 2004. According to Ngware *et al.*, (2006) and Ohba (2009), the number of primary schools also increased from 6,058 in 1963 to about 19,713 in 2004, respectively. Despite this notable increase in the number of schools, such expansion has not kept pace with the increase in school-age population. According to the Ministry of Education sessional paper No. 1 (RoK, 2002), the Gross Enrollment Rate (GER) declined from 29.4% to 22.2% between 1990 and 2000. According to the report, this decline was mainly due to high cost of learning material, expenses for private tuition and unfriendly school environment. The report observes that the Ministry of Education has on regular basis, reviewed the school curriculum with a view to reduce the burden on the government and parents.

According to the ministry of education science and technology sector report (2003), the various strategies being undertaken in order to increase pupils retention include:

- i. Providing support for poor and the disadvantaged pupils through school feeding programmes;
- ii. Providing target support for the development of infrastructure in areas where parents are not able to provide support;
- iii. Recognizing and providing support to children with special talents and abilities; and
- iv. Increasing the provision of business and devise better methods of targeting and distributing funds to the needy.

Ngware *et al.*, (2006) observe that access to primary education is likely to worsen with the huge increase in primary school enrolment following the introduction of free primary education in 2003. The government has, therefore, proposed to increase primary school GER from 29.3 to 45 per cent in 2008. It also proposes to increase the transition rate from 50 to 70 per cent in 2008. Indeed, the Ministry of Education sector report programme 2005 - 2010 asserts that the massive increase in enrollment in primary schools following the introduction of free primary education is already putting pressure on demand for access to primary education. The immediate challenge of primary education is on how to expand access at relatively low cost while at the same time improving the quality of education.

From the extensive research on retention in schools carried out by UNESCO (1977, 1982, 1994, 1996 & 2003), it is evident that low retention is a problem throughout the developing world. Estimates of retention rate in selected countries in the 1980' s and 1990's indicated that two thirds or even half of all pupils in many developing countries who enroll in public primary schools do not go through the primary education cycle. Most studies (Obae, 2004, Kepkemboi 1990 & Kinyangi, 1980) based on access and retention rate in Kenya education highlights several casual factors of the problems of low access and retention rates which include economic conditions, social cultural factors, pupils' behaviour and pedagogical conditions. Natuello (1994) observes that some pupils have also attributed much of the problems to school related factors particularly inefficient school administration. According to Livondo (1992), school administration has been found to have significant influence on the school climate and can predict pupils' retention in schools.

### **2.2.7. Other Challenges Facing FPE in Gatanga**

The challenges that FPE faces in Gatanga do not deviate much from the challenges at the national level. Moreover, there are local realities that are important to take into account. It is also critical to indicate that the challenges are presented in the framework of the Effective School Model whose components are presented under the theoretical framework. According to Wasanga (2004), the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, after the introduction of FPE, was structured into various departments. The departments were charged with the responsibility of

overseeing the implementation of the education sector policies. The departments included: basic education, technical education, higher education, quality assurance and standards and educational planning and policy. At the time of inception in 2003, the quality assurance and standards department was referred to as the "inspectorate", but later changed its name to department of quality assurance and standards (DQAS) in 2004. The setting up of the department was indeed an important step towards the entrenchment of quality in education, especially now that it was being funded by the government.

It is later shown that the most important aspect of the theory on which this study is based is curriculum supervision. It is on this regard that most of the challenges will appear as though they are concentrated on one aspect, quality assurance. Of course all the challenges that face the FPE program in Kenya are evident in Gatanga in one way or the other, but for the sake of this study, it is critical that only the most significant factors of the theory that are evident in Gatanga are addressed.

The DQAS existed before the introduction of FPE. However, its mandate was intensively reviewed after the FPE was introduced in Kenya. Some of its roles were expanded so that issues of quality are well addressed. According to RoK (2000), the mission of the DQAS is to establish, manage and improve the standards of education in the country. On the other hand, the vision is to provide quality assurance feedback for all the educational institutions in Kenya. The wordings in the vision and mission point out towards a huge mandate, that extends beyond the public primary schools but all the educational institutions in the country at all levels of education in both public and private fronts. This implies that there is already a challenge in the immensity of the mandate especially if the resources to employ the quality assurance officers are not adequate (Kairu, 2010). It further implies that for the department to work well, it must be guided by agreed standards and indicators of success in education. All in all, inspection of educational institutions remains a core mandate of the DQSA. It is done by the Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (QASOs).

The QASOs seek to fulfill two main objectives: quality assurance and quality development. Inspection is supposed to establish whether the educational institutions, in this case the public primary schools, have improved their standards since the last inspection. In the process of quality

assurance and development, the progress of pupils is also monitored. As it will be shown, this is also a component of the theory of effective school. According to Gakure, Mukuria and Kithae (2013), checking the progress of pupils is done by comparing the entry level behavior with the end results. Importantly, reform is only achieved if QASOs report back to the educational institutions regarding the performance of their pupils. This implies that if there are no resources to ensure that the QASOs give the feedback to the schools, this could be a great challenge and to some extent an obstacle to the achievement of quality in public primary schools or FPE. In Gatanga, Kairu (2010) notes that the QASOs are not effectively facilitated to do their work. In fact, some schools in the district feel left out in terms of receiving feedback on quality and performance. Notably, QASOs report back to both the schools and the Ministry of Education (MoE), which was MoEST at the time of the FPE inception.

According to Wasanga (2004), the type and extent of challenges that are faced in quality assurance and inspection are determined by the type of inspection being carried out. He identified eight types of inspections that pose different challenges in Gatanga District. These include panel inspection, subject-based inspections, inspection of the registration of educational institutions, advisory inspection, inspection of teachers, inspection for new subjects being introduced into the curriculum, block inspections and mass inspections.

A key challenge facing FPE in Gatanga, just as any other part of the country, is deterioration in the quality. According to Kariuki (2008), quality is a variable that depends on or is caused by other factors. In the conception of this study, poor quality is as a result of inadequate funding that leads to understaffing hence overwhelming of the few teachers. Due to the large number of pupils, the teachers also become indifferent and apathetic that they can make any impact. However, the MoE has come out to defend the position of the government. While the ministry is aware of the inadequacy of the funds it provides, it has cited other factors that have affected quality of education at the local level, such as Gatanga district. The ministry observes that in Gatanga, many people take teaching as the last option and that they do not have the passion for their work. It is further reported that the department of quality assurance and standards has been ineffective in carrying out its mandate in Gatanga (Ogola, 2010; Jensen, 2010).

The challenges facing FPE in Gatanga District with special focus on quality assurance and standards officers are summarized as follows. First, according to Association of Third World Studies Kenya Chapter (ATWS) (2004), school head teachers and other teachers in general always fear to hear the word 'inspector' being mentioned. In other words, the department of quality assurance and standards does not have a good relationship (or at least the perception) with the Gatanga locals. In addition, there are not adequate legal provisions that allow the enforcement of inspection recommendations. Further, there are no adequate skills to carry out assessments that are required for the appraisal of the quality of education and consequent performance of schools. Furthermore, it was established that school inspectors in Gatanga do not undergo later trainings after they are employed; only a short induction course is carried out at the time of employment. In other words, there is no definite or clear staff development policy under the DQAS. As earlier stated, also, there is limited budgetary allocation as well as facilitation of district QASOs in terms of travel logistics, material and tools.

Other challenges pointed out by Casteel (1999) in Kairu (2010) are as follows. It emerged that there is no small-scale strategic planning at the local level, that is in Gatanga. In addition, it is clear that the role of inspectors and advisory staff, both under the DQAS, is sometimes ambiguous. In Gatanga, some of these two types of officers are not aware of what they should be doing. As a result, quality assurance has taken all the time and resources and quality development is somewhat abandoned. In Gatanga, Casteel (1999) observed that there is no procedure for the selection of TAC tutors and Zonal Inspector of Schools (ZIS). Most of these officers were formerly teachers and did not receive additional training to undertake their mandates. The result of this has been poor service delivery. In case the district office receives well trained inspectors, lack of transport and other challenges make them not stay for long; they are absorbed in other departments which would make their work easier. Common conditions of work at the Gatanga district quality assurance and standards office are lack of transport, lack of possibility of upwards mobility and shortage of staffs.

Six years after the FPE was established, the Thika District Educational Board (DEB) conducted a study to establish causes of poor KCPE academic performance in Thika district and municipality in 2009. Most of the causes enlisted were related to the establishment of the FPE. Around the

same time, Odhiambo's study argued that the real cause of poor performance in public primary schools in Kenya is not the performance of teachers per se, but deeply rooted management practices and Government policies which will have to change if this dream is to be realized. (Odhiambo, 2009) This assertion is particularly true of Gatanga, courtesy of the literature so far reviewed.

### **2.3. Theoretical Framework**

A theory is simply a statement that seeks to explain phenomena (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999). In academia, all studies are grounded on theories against which the results are checked. This study employs the Effective Schools Theory which was propounded by Lezotte in 2001. The main argument of Lezotte is that an effective school is measured by the achievement of pupils, which is the primary purpose why it exists, and the delivery of quality and equity. These are pertinent issues as far as education in Kenya is concerned, especially the free primary education. Lezotte did not just propound a theory without evidence. Having collected adequate empirical data over time during his career, he was able to identify the factors that determine the effectiveness of a school. These included, a clear mission which is well focused, a great deal of instructional leadership and curriculum supervision, safety and order, a climate that allows immense expectation of success, opportunity to learn, a positive relationship between the school administration and the parent of pupils as well as frequent monitoring of student progress.

The above seven attributes of an effective school are later reviewed against the free primary education in Kenya, focusing on Gatanga district. The first aspect, instructional leadership has to do with the way teaching is done in the schools. In the case of Gatanga, important aspects to look at are things like the supervision of curriculum implementation and delivery at the school and other levels of educational administration. According to Lezotte (2001), at the school level, the head teacher should take personal responsibility of seeing to it that all the classes are attended to. Since this may be an involving duty, the head teacher can use a variety of methods to monitor whether the teachers actually attend all the lessons. With the introduction of electricity in primary schools in Murang'a County, it is possible for the school to install digital infrastructure that can monitor the delivery of lessons to pupils. However, Lezotte argues that success of this function depends largely on the level of maturity of individual teachers such that they must not



be pushed to teach. The other way of ensuring that curriculum is well delivered is to introduce supervision at the district level in which there are educational and quality assurance inspectors.

Having a clear mission is a key thing to the success and achieving effectiveness at the school. Generally, a mission is an encapsulation of the purpose for which the school exists (ATWS, 2004). A clear mission ensures that all the stakeholders know where the institution is headed hence why some activities in the school are being carried out. Moreover, in order that all the stakeholders may buy into the mission and goals of the school, it is necessary that they are involved in the decision making process for the implementation of the specific activities for the implementation of the mission. The need to involve the stakeholders such as parents in the management of the school becomes more critical at the village level. This is because development studies have shown that unless the locals are involved in the management of the projects in their community, such projects, like educational initiatives, cannot bear fruits.

Lezotte (2001) defines a safe and orderly school as follows. It is supposed to have reasonable expectations of behavior for the learners. There should also be a consistent and fair application of rules and regulations. In the context of Kenya, it is expected that schools in Gatanga operate within the rules that the government has set up regarding children rights; hence things like caning in schools and corporal punishment should not be there. Moreover, it is expected that good approaches of upholding discipline in schools would foster respect between pupils and the adult stakeholders such as the parents and the teachers.

Effective schools must create a climate of high expectations on the part of the pupils and the teachers. For the teachers, all the best practices in instruction must be adopted. On the other hand, the pupils are required to do their part so that the institutions in Gatanga district are admirable for the way they perform. However, performance must not be focused only on the academic part of the development of a student, but also on the extra-curricular front. This is especially relevant in Kenya where it is considered that one who cannot do good in class is deemed to failure (Jensen, 2010). There must be a balanced view of success, hence the formation should be holistic so that those who do not do well in academics can excel in other areas. Further, the school must be well integrated with the community that hosts it. In any case, it is a school for the community as well. A sense of ownership must be cultivated in order that

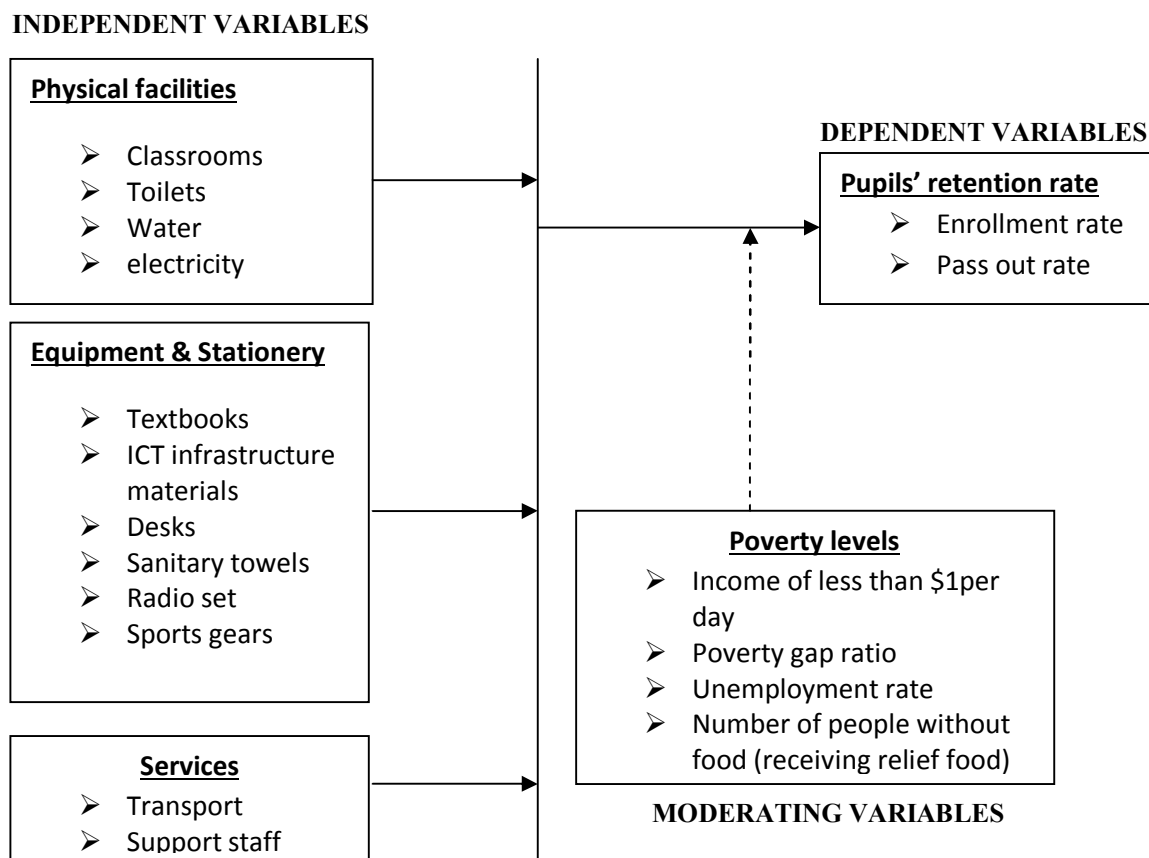
effectiveness is easier to achieve as opposed to a situation in which the school management is not in good terms with the local community.

As expected, each school should give the pupils an opportunity to learn. Pupils are required to spend most of the time doing the mainstream activities for learning purposes. In so doing, there should be no discrimination at all. In the context of Kenya, there exist massive divisions on the basis of ethnic backgrounds. Such things should not be the basis of selection, but a more expert opinion is required since the new system of counties require that majority of the pupils in a school come from the county in which the school is located.

The theory of effective school is very relevant in this study whose title infuses the term 'effectiveness'. All the seven correlates of the theory are seen to play a central role in the performance of pupils in Murang'a County. Indeed, they are the outcomes of the four categories espoused in the conceptual framework below, as they directly affect academic performance. At this stage, it is clarified that indeed, the most important and operative element of the theoretical framework, which happened after the introduction of FPE, was the curriculum leadership and supervision that is presented in terms of quality assurance and standards. It was shown that it was only after the FPE was introduced that the government established the department. Most likely, the department's mandate would have been different if the primary education in public schools was not free. It is as if the government did not want its money to go to waste.

#### **2.4. Conceptual Framework**

The theory of Effective School informs the conceptual framework. The theory was interpreted in the context of the FPE in Kenya. Its seven aspects (a clear mission, instructional leadership and curriculum supervision, safety and order, high expectations of success, opportunity to learn, positive school-community relationship and frequent monitoring of student progress) were contextualized into four categories or variables which include provision of physical facilities, provision of equipment and stationery, provision of services and hiring of teachers. The conceptualized relationships are represented below:



*Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework*

The basic argument presented above is that the four variables on the left side affect the pupils retention rate in public primary schools. Each of the variables is characterized by several measureable indicators that can be correlated to quantitative enrollment and pass out rate. Pupils retention rate will be considered for the upper classes since as shown under literature review, the retention rate of those pupils is considered least affected by their understanding of importance of education in their lives. Moreover, at the middle, the level of poverty of individual pupils' households is the moderating variables since it affects the impact of FPE. For instance, even if FPE exists, the pupils may prefer to go to work for food for their families.

## 2.5. Knowledge Gaps and Summary of Reviewed Literature

Many studies on the factors affecting success of FPE in Kenya have been done. In the same way, several studies such as Thika District Education Board (2009), Gakure et al (2009) and Kairu

(2010) and others have been done in Gatanga. What recent studies have not been able to establish is whether in the context of those factors or challenges, government funding and supervision has made any impact in performance, or rather whether FPE is effective any way. In Gatanga, the contribution of the BoGs and the parents associations to the performance of schools has not been well investigated.

Further, no known study has quantified, not just described, the relationship between government funding as well as number of pupils in a school with their performance. This study does not only investigate the causal mechanism of between the government's role and pupils retention but also quantifies the relationship, something that has lacked in previous studies. Furthermore, all past studies appear to treat education as an important ingredient for national development. It is apparent that no other studies prior to the introduction of FPE in Kenya that considered education as a fundamental human right in this country. This study also considers education as a right for every Kenyan child hence the need to see that FPE makes positive impacts through better performance and highly quality outcomes for the learners.

This chapter has achieved a milestone in the review of literature on FPE not only nationally but also in the context of Gatanga. The focus of the chapter was from the wider to more aspects that are specific. It began by exploring the international origin of the call for education of all. One of the main international sources for this push was the UN MDGs, which called for the global adoption of universal education by all countries by the year 2015. This was followed by a description of how FPE was introduced in Kenya. Under this, it was observed that despite the international calls for the adoption of EFA, FPE in Kenya may probably have longer if it were not for political motivations of the then NARC government. The political coalition promised it to Kenyans if at all they elected them into power. Hence there was no preparation on the part of the institutions as well as the relevant government departments. This led the review into the next logical step of recounting the challenges faced by the FPE in Kenya in general and those that were specific to Gatanga district.

Further, it was necessary that the study was grounded on a theory. The chapter hence described the Effective School Theory and delineated its meaning in the context of Gatanga educational context. Literature shows that generally, issues that ail the FPE program at the national level are

common at the Gatanga district level, but there are specific realities that have to be taken into account: excessive drinking, insecurity, absenteeism, poor supervision and management of the educational system. The conceptual framework explained the expected relationships among the variables and was derived from the theory. It was argued that aspects of FPE from the government side, such as funding and supervision, coupled with the management of the individual schools, were the key aspects of the Effective Schools Model that could defined the factors that would directly influence the effectiveness of FPE.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1. Introduction

This chapter describes the research procedure and technique employed by the study. This include research design, target population, sample and sampling procedure, research instruments, data collection procedures, validity, reliability and methods of data analysis. Ethical considerations are also presented.

#### 3.2. Research Design

This is an ex-post-facto descriptive survey. This is a type of research used to obtain data that can help determine specific characteristics of a group. A descriptive survey involves asking questions (often in the form of a questionnaire) to a large group of individuals either by mail, by telephone or in person. This was done using guided structured and semi-structured questionnaires to collect data from guidance and counseling teachers, head teachers and parents associations to avoid biases opinions from one side of the data. The design provides self-reported facts about respondents, their inner feelings, attitudes, opinions and habits (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). Descriptive design was chosen because it is usually the best method for collecting information that will demonstrate relationships and describe the world as it exists and can answer questions such as "what is" or "what was." The study aimed to gain insight into the pupils' performance in KCPE after the introduction of the FPE.

#### 3.3. Target Population

The study has targeted public primary schools in Kenya. It has focused on Murang'a County. Groups of persons who were important to study are the guidance and counseling teachers, head teachers, parents associations and to provide first hand insight into understanding how introduction of FPE has contributed to the performance of pupils retention in schools. Those who responded to the study are the key participants in educational processes and implementation. They were chosen because of their position and vested responsibilities at the grassroots level.

### **3.4. Sample size and sampling procedure**

The study has used the Gatanga District list of primary schools as the sampling frame to determine the size of the sample to include in the study and the procedure of arriving at the sample.

#### **3.4.1. Sample size**

A total of 32 primary schools officials were involved. The regions and schools were chosen on grounds of how accessible they were (taking into account the size of the district) and representation (taking into account the features and specificities of different wards).

#### **3.4.2. Sampling Procedure**

In order to get a representative sample from a population, Kathuri and Pals (1993) recommend that when a survey targets a major sub-group, at least 100 cases were investigated. The sampling design that was used is a survey design. First, a purposive random sampling was used to select Gatanga constituency being one of the constituencies in Kenya. The pupils will be randomly selected. Since guidance and counseling teachers and head teachers are few in the area, all in each category will be used. all the guidance and counselling teachers are stationed in each specific school so was easier to locate them. Data was collected using a guided structured and semi-structured questionnaire, since the literacy levels of the targeted population of the parents association is low hence could not comprehend English well. Again this was guided because some were busy working on their firms or businesses, hence there was no need of setting aside specific time for the questionnaire answering, but this was done while the individual respondent continued with their daily businesses, hence no rushing to answer in order to resume working.

### **3.5. Methods of Data Collection**

This study made use of two main data collection methods. The first was a document review, where policy documents, education statistics, annual abstracts and reports were assessed; the second method relied on administering closed and open ended survey questionnaires to the respondents to obtain in-depth information regarding the influence of FPE in pupils retention in school checking the data such as financial information, enrolment, pass out and drop-out rates at those schools.. Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) assert that for any meaningful statistical analysis

to be conducted, the sample size must be more than 30. Moreover, the greater the sample, the better the results.

### **3.6. Validity**

According to Kathuri and Pals (1993) validity refers to the appropriateness of the measure for specific inferences that result from the scores generated by the measure. To test for validity of instruments, the instruments were presented to the supervisor for guidance. The advice, suggestions and recommendations was incorporated in the final document of the research instruments. This further improved the content and face validity of the instruments.

During the field survey, the following among others were put in place to ensure validity:

- i. Checking one informant's descriptions of something against another informant's description of the same thing.
- ii. Learning to understand and, where appropriate, speak the vocabulary of the group being studied.
- iii. Writing down the questions asked (in addition to the answers received). This will help to make sense at a later date out of the answers recorded earlier, and this helped reduce distortions owing to selective forgetting.
- iv. Recording personal thoughts while conducting observations and interviews. Responses that seemed unusual or incorrect will be noted and checked later against other remarks or observations.
- v. Documenting the sources of remarks whenever possible and appropriate. This will help make sense out of comments that otherwise seemed misplaced.

### **3.7. Reliability**

Reliability is the measure of the degree to which research instrument yields consistent results after repeated trials (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999). The questionnaires will be pretested with different respondents from the neighboring kandara Constituency, in the same muranga County. The internal consistency technique was employed to determine the reliability of the instruments. Internal consistency reliability is the extent to which items in a single test are consistent among themselves and the test as a whole (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2006). The reliability of the



questionnaires was tested using Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient. Mugenda, and Mugenda, (1999) recommend a threshold level of 0.70 for an acceptable reliability Coefficient.

### **3.8. Data collection procedures**

The proposal was presented before the University of Nairobi examination panel for defense. Upon approval of the proposal, the researcher obtain a letter of introduction from the University of Nairobi and a research permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation as pre-requisite for data collection. Once all permissions were granted, the researcher visited the study area to make appointments with the respondents. The respondents were visited on the agreed dates and the research instruments administered to them.

### **3.9. Methods of Data Analysis**

The data collected was examined and organized in terms of how complete, comprehensible, consistent and reliable they they were. Both qualitative and quantitative approaches were used. The rationale is that qualitative approaches study selective issues and that data collection was not affected by pre-determined and standardized response choices. A quantitative approach ensured that data compiled and analyzed statistics and numerical data. The figures were therefore easily aggregated for analysis and presentation. Tables were used to guide how findings were interpreted. These multiple approaches and methods provided a way to offset the different biases of each method and to test whether the findings were sufficiently robust and not mere artifacts of any particular method. All in all, the methods relied on data collection techniques.

The quality of data collected for this study has been tested for accuracy and use, using statistical instruments and peer reviews. In this regard, parameter comparable to an existing regional and national average was used. Key information and data collection patterns for schools and system levels were compared with that of constituency and county averages. The results revealed some similarities.

### **3.10. Operational Definition of Variables**

There were two main independent variables: provision of physical facilities, equipment and stationery and services. These are considered in the left hand side in the conceptual framework

presented in chapter 2. The dependent variable, pupils retention in school, was measured by the number of those who were retained in school when compared to the enrolment rate. This was operationally defined as the mean score.

### **3.11. Ethical Considerations**

Information obtained from other sources or from authors to support the relevance of this study was acknowledged in the form of references. Adequate and clear explanation on the purpose of the study to each respondent was provided. The study also sought the respondent's permission to participate in the study while assuring them that their participation was voluntary. All the participants were assured of total confidentiality and that the information they provided would be used for research purposes only. The study endeavored in maximizing good outcomes for science, humanity, and the individual research participants and minimized and to avoid unnecessary risk, harm, or wrong to anyone involved. Respondents were treated with respect and courtesy, including those who were not autonomous like small children and people who had mental retardation or senility.

### **3.12. Summary**

The aim of this chapter was to present the specific methods that were used in this study, at various stages of the investigation. At the widest level, the research design was defined. It was explained that the study adopted mixed designs which include a descriptive and a causal design. Later, specific methods to be adopted in the sampling were delineated. Basically, convenience sampling was used in this study. It was also explained that a questionnaire and interview guide was used to collect data. Further, validity was ensured by selecting a large sample while reliability was assured by following precise methods of data processing and analysis. Analysis was done at the descriptive and inferential levels in which measures of central tendency or spread and correlation analysis was used. For the interview data, content analysis and theme matching was used.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.1. Introduction

This chapter presented the empirical findings on how FPE is influencing retention of pupils in public primary schools in Gatanga District on the basis of research questions. The mode of data analysis was guided by the following research questions:

- i. How does the provision of physical facilities influence pupils' retention rate?
- ii. To what extent does the provision of school equipment influence pupils' retention rate?
- iii. In what ways does the provision of services influence pupils' retention rate?

#### 4.2. Respondents' Biodata and Profiles

The first concern was to document biodata of the respondents. The respondents for this study comprised Headteachers, guidance and counseling teachers and standard one & two class teachers. In this section, the respondents' characteristics at the time of the research are presented. These characteristics include age, gender, marital status, highest level of education and years served in the current position.

##### 4.2.1. Age

Table 4.1 indicates that most of the Headteachers 7 (87.5%) were from 36-45 years while 1 (12.5%) were of the ages 55 and above.

**Table 4.1: Distribution of head teachers' age**

Age in years	Number	Percentage
18-25	0	0
26-35	0	0
36-45	28	87.5
46-55	0	0
55 and above	4	12.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>100</b>

More than fifty per cent 4 (57.1%) of the guidance and counseling teachers were from 36-45 years, 2 (28.6%) were of the ages 46-55 and 1 (14.3%) were of the ages 55 and above. Table 4.2 shows their age distribution in years.

**Table 4.2: Distribution of Guidance & Counseling Teachers' age**

Age in years	Number	Percentage
18-25	0	0
26-35	0	0
36-45	16	57.1
46-55	8	28.6
55 and above	4	14.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>100</b>

Most of the class teachers 21 (65.6%) were from 36-45 years, 2 (6.3%) were aged between 18-25, 5 (15.6%) were of the ages 26-35, 3 (9.4%) were of the ages 46-55 and 1 (3.1%) were of the ages 55 and above (Table 4.3).

**Table 4.3: Distribution of PTA official age**

Age in years	Number	Percentage
18-25	2	6.3
26-35	2	15.6
36-45	21	65
46-55	3	9.4
55 and above	1	3.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>100</b>

#### **4.2.2. Gender**

Table 4.4 shows that the female representation was 4 (50%) and 4 (50%) for male. It can be deduced that in terms of gender, both sexes were fairly represented among the Headteachers.

**Table 4.4: Distribution of Headteachers' gender**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Male	16	50
Female	16	50
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4.5 shows that more than fifty per cent of the guiding and counseling teachers 4 (57.1 %) were female and 3 (42.9%) were male.

**Table 4.5: Distribution of Guiding and Counseling Teachers' gender**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Male	12	42.9
Female	16	57.1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>100</b>

According to Table 4.6 more than fifty per cent of the class teachers 19 (59.6%) were female and 13 (40.6%) were male.

**Table 4.6: Distribution of PTA official gender**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Male	12	42.9
Female	16	57.1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>100</b>

### **4.2.3. Marital Status**

Table 4.7 shows that most of the Headteachers 6 (75%) said they were married while 2 (25%) did not comment.

**Table 4.7: Distribution of Headteachers' marital status**

<b>Marital status of respondents</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Married	24	75
Not married	0	0
No response	8	25
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4.8 indicates that about 5 (71.4%) of the guidance and Counseling teachers were married and only 1 (14.3%) said they were not married.

**Table 4.8: Distribution of Guidance and Counseling Teachers' marital status**

<b>Marital status of respondents</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Married	20	71.4
Not married	4	14.3
No response	4	14.3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4.9 indicates that Most of the class teachers 22 (68.8%) were married, 7 (21.9%) were not married and 3 (9.4%) did not comment. This information is presented in Table 4.9 below.

**Table 4.9: Distribution of PTA officials marital status**

<b>Marital status of respondents</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Married	22	68.8
Not married	7	21.9
No response	3	9.4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>100</b>

#### **4.2.4. Highest Level of Education**

Table 4.10 shows that all the Headteachers 8 (100%) had university level academic qualifications.

**Table 4.10: Distribution of Headteachers' levels of education**

Highest level of education	Number	Percentage
Primary	0	0
College	0	0
University	32	100
Total	32	100

Most of the guidance and Counseling teachers 5 (71.4%) had attained university level academic qualifications while 2 (28.6%) had completed college. This information is presented in Table 4.11 below.

**Table 4.11: Distribution of Guiding & Counseling Teachers' level of education**

Highest level of education	Number	Percentage
Primary	0	0
College	8	28.6
University	20	71.4
Total	28	100

According to Table 4.12, most of the class teachers 25 (78.1%) had completed university followed by college level qualifications 5 (15.6%) and a few 2 (6.3%) with primary level qualifications.

**Table 4.12: Distribution of PTA official education level**

Highest level of education	Number	Percentage
Primary	2	6.3
College	5	15.6
University	25	78.1
Total	32	100

Table 4.13 shows that about 3 (37.5%) of the Headteachers indicated that they had been Headteachers for more than ten years, 2 (25%) had served for more than two but less than five

years, 2 (25%) had served for more than five but less than ten years and 1 (12.5%) has served for less than a year.

**Table 4.13: Years Served in the Position of Headteacher**

<b>Period served in years</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Less than 1 year	4	12.5
More than 1 but less than two years	0	0
More than 2 but less than 5 years	8	25
More than 5 but less than 10 years	8	25
More than 10 years	12	37.5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4.14 shows that most of the guidance and Counseling teachers 3 (42.9%) had served for more than two but less than five years, 2 (28.6%) had served for more than five but less than ten years and 2 (28.6%) had served for more than ten years.

**Table 4.14: Years Served in the Position of Guidance & Counseling Teacher**

<b>Period served in years</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Less than 1 year	0	0
More than 1 but less than two years	0	0
More than 2 but less than 5 years	12	42.9
More than 5 but less than 10 years	8	28.6
More than 10 years	8	28.6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4.15 shows that most of the class teachers 20 (62.5%) had served for more than ten years, 4 (12.5%) had served for more than five but less than ten years, 4 (12.5%) had served for more than two but less than five years, 2 (6.3%) had served for more than one but less than two years and 2 (6.3%) had served for less than a year in the position of class teacher.



**Table 4.15: Years Served in the Position of PTA official**

Period served in years	Number	Percentage
Less than 1 year	2	6.3
More than 1 but less than two years	2	6.3
More than 2 but less than 5 years	4	12.5
More than 5 but less than 10 years	4	12.5
More than 10 years	20	62.5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>100</b>

### 4.3. Provision of physical facilities influence pupils retention rate in Gatanga District

The first research question was to determine that provision of physical facilities influence pupils retention rate in Gatanga District. Most of the Headteachers 20 (62.5%) and 24 (75%) respectively strongly agree that availability of classrooms and playground affect pupils retention rate. Still, 20 (62.5%) of the Headteachers agree that having enough and clean latrines influence pupils retention. Half of the Headteachers 16 (50%) agree that availability of workshops influences pupils retention, 12 (37.5%) strongly agree and 4 (12.5%) strongly disagree (Table 4.16).

**Table 4.16: Headteachers' Views on physical facilities**

Socio-economic factors-Headteachers	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Latrines	20	62.5	8	25	0	0	0	0	1	12.5
Playground	12	37.5	16	50	0	0	0	0	1	12.5
Classrooms	12	37.5	8	25	0	0	12	38	0	0
Garden	8	25	20	63	0	0	4	13	0	0
Water	12	37.5	20	63	0	0	0	0	0	0
Electricity	4	12.5	20	63	4	13	4	13	0	0

All the Headteachers 32 (100%) were unanimous that their students have ever dropped out of school. the reasons for not attending school was lack of fees to cater for all the requirements, a reason contributing to low participation in primary school education, accounting for most of the responses.

When asked to indicate whether the money allocated to the schools to cater for physical facilities were used as advised, the Headteachers indicated that 20 (62.5%) was well spent, 8 (25%) was diverted to ther areas in the school expenses and 4 (12.5%) the money was not spent well. The Headteachers observed that the school administration was trying to follow the government's instruction in the purchases. (Table. 4.1).

**Table 4.17: Headteachers views on spending of the money allocated for physical facilities**

<b>Number of Headteacher</b>	<b>percentage</b>	<b>responce</b>
<b>28</b>	<b>87.5</b>	<b>yes</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>12.5</b>	<b>no</b>

Most of the guidance and Counseling masters 24 (85.7%) strongly agree and agree that availability of water affect primary school pupils' retention in Gatanga District with only 1 (14.3%) saying they disagree. More than half of the respondents 16 (57.1%) agree that availability of latrines influence primary school pupils retention. On the matter of availability of classrooms 4 (14.3%) agree and 8 (28.6%) did not comment. On the matter of availability of electricty 8 (28.6%) agree while 4 (14.3%) disagree. The findings of the study indicate that 16 (57.1%) of the guidance and Counseling masters strongly agree that availability of space and classrooms influence primary school pupils retention while 12 (42.9%) agree. Also, 16 (57.1%) of the guidance and Counseling masters agree that availability of playgrounds motivate primary school pupils and contribute to their retention while 12 (42.9%) strongly agree. (Table 4.17).

**Table 4.18: Guidance and Counseling Teachers' Views on physical facilities provision**

Physical facilities	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
School garden	24	85.7	0	0	0	0	4	14	0	0
Playground	12	37.5	16	50	0	0	0	0	0	0
Classrooms	16	57.1	4	14	8	29	0	38	0	0
Latrines	12	42.9	16	57	0	0	0	0	0	0
Water	24	85.7	0	0	0	0	4	14	0	0
Electricity	12	42.9	8	29	8	29	0	0	0	0

The guidance and Counseling masters were unanimous 28 (100%) that their pupils have dropped out of school. The reasons for dropping out include poor performance, domestic problems, theft, indiscipline, chronic absenteeism, pregnancy and sickness.

**Table 4.19: Guidance and counseling teachers' views on spending of the money allocated for physical facilities**

Number of teachers	percentage	response
24	85.7	Yes
4	14.3	no

Half the PTA officials 16 (50%) strongly agree that availability of latrines influences primary school access and retention, 8 (25% agree), 5 (15.6%) disagree, 1 (3.1%) strongly disagree and 2 (6.3%) were undecided. The study's findings also indicate that 15 (46.9%) strongly agree that availability of classrooms affects primary school pupils retention, 9 (28.1%) agree, 6 (18.8%) disagree and 2 (6.3%) were undecided. It emerged that 15 (46.9%) of the class teachers strongly agree that having water in the school premises affects primary school access and retention, 13 (40.6%) agree and 4 (12.5%) disagree. The findings indicate that 15 (46.9%) of the PTA officials agree that availability of water influence primary school access and retention, 9 (28.1%) strongly agree, 3 (9.4%) disagree 2 (6.3%) strongly disagree and 3 (9.4%) were undecided. Similarly among the PTA officials 9 (28.1%) strongly agree that having school garden affect primary school pupils retention, 4 (12.5%) disagree, 2 (6.3%) strongly disagree and 2 (6.3%) were

undecided. Further, 7 (42.9%) of the PTA officials strongly agree that harassment at home affects pupils primary school retention, 2 (28.6%) agree, 2 (28.6%) were undecided, (Table 4.18).

**Table 4.20: PTA officials Views on physical facilities provision**

physical facilities	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Latrines	16	50	8	25	2	6.3	5	15.6	1	3.1
Playground	9	37.5	4	50	0	0	0	0	0	0
Classrooms	15	46.9	9	28.1	2	6.3	6	18.8	0	0
Garden	9	28.1	23	71.9	0	0	0	0	0	0
Water	15	46.9	13	40.6	0	0	1	12.5	0	0
Electricity	28	42.9	4	29	4	29	0	0	0	0

Asked if any of their pupils had dropped out of school, 29 (90%) of the PTA officials were confirmatory while 3 (9.4%) denied. The reasons for dropping include lack of school fees, pregnancy, indiscipline, lack of interest in education and availability of jobs such as *boda boda*, driving, quarry mining, *shamba* boys, among others. It also emerged that some parents feel it is a waste of time to educate their children with some arguing that education is not everything coupled with poor school administration, lack of parental motivation, lack of freedom at school, inability to cope with academic requirements, indiscipline and post election violence (Table. 4.3).

**Table 4.21: PTA officials views on whether the students dropped from school**

No of class teachers	Percentage of class teachers	response
29	90.6	Yes
3	9.4	no

Most of the PTA officials 23 (68.8%) said that the the amount allocated for physical facilities were not enough, 9 (18.8%) said the money was enough (Table. 4.4).

**Table 4.22: PTA official views on whether the money allocated for physical facilities was used accordingly**

No of class teachers	Percentage of class teachers	response
23	71.8	NO
9	28.2	YES

#### 4.4. Provision of equipment and stationery affect primary school pupils retention in Gatanga District.

It emerged from the study that 12 (42.9%) of the guidance and Counseling teachers strongly agree that provision of ICT infrastructure materials influences pupils retention. More than fifty percent 16 (57.1%) of guidance and Counseling teachers agreed that availability of text books contributed and 12(42.9%) said that provision of sanitary towels played a role in pupils retention ins school. The study's findings also indicate that 12 (42.9%) of the guidance and Counseling teachers disagree with the idea that provision of desks affects retention, 4 (14.3%) strongly disagree, 4 (14.3%) agree, 4(14.3%) strongly agree and 4 (14.3%) were undecided (Table 4.19).

**Table 4.23: Guidance and Counseling Teachers' Views on provision of equipment & stationery**

Equipment & stationery	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Textbooks	4	14.3	16	57	0	0	0	0	8	28.6
ICT materials	12	42.9	8	29	4	14	0	0	4	14.3
Desks	4	14.3	4	14	4	14	12	43	4	14.3
Sanitary towels	8	28.6	12	43	0	0	4	14	4	14.3
Radio set	0	0	16	57	0	0	8	29	4	14.3
Sports gear	8	28.6	8	29	4	14	4	14	4	14.3

Half 16 (50%) of the Headteachers strongly agree that having equipments and text books contributes to retention of pupils in school. Most of the Headteachers 24 (75%) agrees that provision of sport gears contributes to pupils retention in schools. About 20 (62.5%) of the

Headteachers agree that providing sanitary towels to the girls contributes much in pupils retention (Table 4.20).

**Table 4.24: Headteachers' Views on provision of equipment & stationery**

Equipment & stationery	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Textbooks	4	50	2	25	0	0	1	13	1	12.5
ICT materials	3	37.5	5	63	0	0	0	0	0	0
Desks	4	50	2	25	0	0	1	13	1	12.5
Sanitary towels	2	25	5	63	0	0	0	0	1	12.5
Sports gear	0	0	6	75	0	0	1	13	0	0
Radio set	2	25	3	38	1	13	1	13	2	25

Half (50%) of the PTA officials strongly agree that provision of desks contributes to pupils retention in school. More than half of the class teachers 17 (53.2%) and 19 (59.4%) agree that having textbooks and ICT infrastructure materials contributed to retention. Half (50%) of the PTA officials agree having sanitary towels provided to the girls and sports gears for overall pupils influences pupils retention in school (Table 4.21).

**Table 4.25: PTA officials Views on provision of equipment & stationery**

Equipment & stationery	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Textbooks	7	21.9	17	53	2	6.3	3	9.4	3	9.4
ICT materials	8	25	19	59	3	9.4	1	3.1	1	3.1
desks	16	50	5	16	0	0	6	19	5	15.6
Sanitary towels	7	21.9	16	50	3	9.4	3	9.4	3	9.4
Radio set	1	3.1	15	47	4	13	8	25	4	12.5
Sports gear	5	15.6	16	50	2	6.3	5	16	4	12.5

Most of the PTA officials 20 (62.5%) indicated that the the money received was not adequate to finance all pupils needs and need to be improved while 12 (37.5%) said it was enough. This came with a view that most of these funds were not well spent thus creating a shortage. (Table. 4.6).

**Table 4.22: Whether the money received was not adequate to finance all pupils' needs**

Number of class teachers	Percentage of class teachers	response
20	62.5	no
12	37.5	yes

#### 4.5. provision of services contributes to primary school pupils retention in school, in Gatanga District.

The study's findings indicate that 20 (71.4%) of the guidance and Counseling masters strongly agree that availability of funds to cater for school activities transport and wages for support staff has contributed in pupils retention in school. Similarly, 12 (42.9%) of the guidance and Counseling masters strongly agree that having services catered for without the pupils paying fees has as well contributed in pupils retention in school. None of the respondents were undecided.

**Table 4.27: Guidance and Counseling Teachers' Views on provision of services**

services	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
transport	20	71.4	4	14	0	0	4	14	0	0
Wages for support staff	20	71.4	12	43	0	0	4	14	4	14.3

The guidance and Counseling masters observed that provision of funds to cater for services facilitated teachers work in primary schools and removed the burden from the pupils who would often miss classes as the parents could not manage to pay this money both on time and in full amounts. Therefore, as children learning from one level to the other was not interrupted and this assisted to retain them in school.

About 16 (50.0%) of the Headteachers strongly agree that waiving the student fees on transport n wages for support staff contributes to retention of pupils in school. Still, 12 (37.5%) of the

Headteachers agreed just 4(12.5%) disagreed that provision of wages for support staff by the government contributes to retention of pupils in school (Table 4.23).

**Table 4.28: Headteachers' Views on provision of services**

Provision of services	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Transport	16	50	12	38	4	13	0	0	0	0
Wages for support staff	16	50	12	38	0	0	4	13	0	0

The Headteachers said that some of the pupils who dropped out always performed poorly but there was room for improvement though no improvement was noted. It emerged that more pressing issues such as lack of school fees, family issues such as lack of support, among others were the main reasons for dropping out. However, the study also established that disparities in access and participation at primary school level persist for children with disabilities.

The study's findings indicate that 17 (53.1%) of the class teachers strongly agree that funding of transport for school activities affect access and retention. Similarly, 16 (50%) of the class teachers strongly agree that catering for wages affect retention. It also emerged that 12 (37.5%) of the class teachers agree that student when students fees on transport is waived it affects access and retention of pupils in schools. In addition, 9 (28.1%) of the class teachers agree that elimination of paying fees to cater for wages affect access and retention of pupils in school. Therefore, a high percentage support the fact that funding or school services through FPE has helped in retaining pupils in school. (Table 4.24).

**Table 4.29: PTA officials Views on provision of services**

Services	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Transport	17	53.1	12	38	2	6.3	2	6.3	0	0
Wages for support staff	16	50	9	28	5	16	0	0	2	6.3



#### 4.6 Poverty level factors that affect primary access and retention, in Gatanga District

The study's findings indicate that 16 (57.1 %) of the guidance and Counseling masters strongly agree that earning an income of less than one dollar per day affects access and retention while 4 (14.3%) disagree. Besides, 12 (42.9%) of the guidance and Counseling masters strongly agree that poverty gap ratio affect access and retention. The study established that 12 (42.9%) of the guidance and Counseling masters strongly disagree with the idea that unemployment affects access and retention. It emerged from the study that 20 (71.4%) of the guidance and Counseling masters agree that health and other social services affect access and retention (Table 4.25).

**Table 4.30: Guidance and Counseling Teachers' Views on poverty level Factors**

Poverty level	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Unemployment	12	42.9	8	29	4	14	4	14	0	0
Number of people without food (receiving relief food)	4	14.3	20	71	0	0	0	0	4	14.3
Poverty gap ratio	12	42.9	8	29	0	0	0	0	8	28.6
Income of less than \$1per day	16	57.1	12	43	0	0	0	0	0	0

The study's findings indicate that 16 (50%) of the Headteachers strongly agree that poverty level affect access and retention. It also emerged that 12 (37.5%) of the Headteachers strongly agree that security and health and other social services affect access and retention. According to the findings 16 (50%) of the Headteachers agree that security affect access and retention while 4 (12.5%) disagree (Table 4.26).

**Table 4.31: Headteachers' Views on poverty level Factors**

Poverty level	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Unemployment	12	37.5	16	50	0	0	4	13	0	0
Number of people without food (receiving relief food)	12	37.5	12	38	0	0	4	13	4	12.5
Poverty gap ratio	16	50	4	13	4	13	4	13	4	12.5
Income of less than \$1per day	16	50	4	13	4	13	8	25	0	0

The study's findings indicate that 19 (59.4%) of the PTA officials strongly agree that availability of schools affect access and retention, 7 (21.9%) agree, 3 (9.4%) disagree and 9.4% strongly disagree. Similarly, 16 (50%) of the PTA officials strongly agree that work availability affect access and retention, 12 (37.5%) agree, 3 (9.4%) were undecided and 1 (3.1%) strongly disagree. It emerged that 16 (50.1%) of the PTA officials agree that security affect access and retention, 9.4% were undecided, 5 (15.6%) disagree and 2 (6.3%) strongly disagree (Table 4.27).

**Table 4.32: PTA officials Views on poverty level Factors**

Poverty level	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Unemployment	9	28.1	16	50.1	3	9.4	5	15.6	2	6.3
Number of people without food (receiving relief food)	9	28.1	17	53.1	0	0	3	9.4	3	9.4
Poverty gap ratio	19	59.4	7	21.9	0	0	6	18.8	0	
Income of less than \$1per day	16	50.1	12	37.5	3	9.4	0	0	1	3.1

#### **4.7 Summary of Relationship between the Dependent and Independent variables**

The study results indicate that generally, FPE has contributed to the retention of pupils in schools. The findings offer evidence that the three variables of that measure FPE (physical facilities; materials and equipment; and services), if effectively implemented, contribute to the pupils remaining in schools. For instance on physical facilities provision, most of the Headteachers (62.5% and 75%) strongly agree that availability of classrooms and playground respectively affected pupils retention rate. In addition, 50% of Headteachers agree that availability of workshops influences pupils retention in schools. Most of the guidance and counseling masters (85.7%) strongly agreed that availability of water affect primary school pupils retention in Gatanga District. Further, 57.1% agreed that availability of latrines influenced primary school pupils retention. Half the class teachers strongly agreed that availability of latrines influenced primary school access and retention.

On materials and equipment, more than fifty percent (57.1%) of guidance and counseling teachers agreed that availability of text books contributed to higher levels of retention. On the other hand, 50% of the Headteachers strongly agree that having desks and text books contributes to retention of pupils in school. Most of the Headteachers (75%) agree that provision of sport gears contributes to pupils retention in schools. Likewise, more than half of the class teachers agree that having textbooks and ICT infrastructure materials contributed to retention. On services provision, the study's findings indicate that 71.4% of the guidance and counseling masters strongly agree that availability of funds to cater for school activities transport and wages for support staff has contributed in pupils retention in school. In addition, about (50.0%) of the Headteachers strongly agree that waiving the student fees on transport and wages for support staff contributes to retention of pupils in school.

Overall, the relationship between the dependent variable (retention of pupils in school) and independent variables (physical facilities; materials and equipment; and services provision) is positive and strong. It was positive because findings impliedly showed that an increase in the FPE quality would also increase the retention rate of pupils. The relationship is strong because in all the cases, the percentage is more than fifty percent. This implies that if the government increases funding for FPE, then school dropout rate would decline significantly.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the summary, discussions, conclusion and recommendations on how the Free Primary Education has contributed in retention of pupils in public primary schools in Gatanga District.

#### 5.2. Summary of the findings of the study

The study's findings indicate that most of the head teachers, guidance and counseling teachers and class teachers were in agreement that their pupils have ever dropped out of school. For them, primary school pupils' retention is influenced by disability to cater for the funds which the schools demand from the pupils. The study also established that the respondents noted that availability of physical facilities in schools influence the pupils' retention in Gatanga District. The pupils are comfortable sitting on the desks as the teachers teach them. They can take their notes neatly too. Construction of classes also gives pupils a chance to learn in a safe and well protected place and their personal effects too are safe. Others enjoy having their games and sports in the playgrounds and as well develop their careers in sports and athletics due to availability of the facility.

It emerged from the study that most of the guidance and Counseling teachers suggest that the physical facilities that affect primary school access and retention in Gatanga District are the classrooms, toilets, water, electricity, playgrounds and school gardens. The guidance and Counseling noted the highest level of education completed by either parent or guardian was primary. The study's findings indicate that the class teachers said that the provision of physical facilities has largely contributed to retention of pupils in schools. The class teachers also concurred with the others.

On school equipment and stationery affecting primary school pupils retention, most of the respondents supported the idea that provision of text books, exercise books, learning manuals, desks, sanitary towels, and sport gears contributes a big deal in retaining pupils.

Most of the respondents agreed that provision of services also retained pupils in schools. But despite the effort by the government of abolishing fees payment by pupils in primary schools, it was cited that poverty played a big role in pupils dropping out of school. Most of them dropped so that to get employed and support their parents while others were drop to stay with their young ones as sick family members as the parents work to earn a living.

### **5.3. Discussions of Findings**

The study findings indicate physical facilities that affect primary school access and retention in Gatanga District include the classroom, toilets, water, electricity, playgrounds, school garden among others.

Abagi (1997) observes that because of poverty an increasing number of boys and girls in are out of school to seek salaried jobs to supplement family income. Those families that live in poverty may have no money to spare for education, hence low access and retention in poor families (ILO, 1995; Human Rights Watch, 1996; RoK, 1998). The, male children in these families will be required to assist the parents support the family (Combs & Cooley, 1968). Another contributing factor of low access and retention of males' pupils in primary schools is that parents are shifting priority from boys' education to that of girls. A parent argues that girls are more responsible than boys. They help their parents more and take education seriously (Wanjohi, 2001).

Sifuna (1978) suggests that economic factors are responsible for a large percentage of those who access education, complete the cycle or drop out of school. He adds that the government has an important role to play especially in streamlining the school fees charged in primary school to make education accessible to all. Parents of children who either drop out of school or don't go to school have a low education, or would have themselves no education or dropped out of school. Such parents tend to marry at a very early age and have large families. Children from such families have a low esteem and are mostly not involved in community and school activities (Cervants, 1965; Stobo, 1973; Cutbill, 1974; Zomanzoden & Prince, 1979; Weiss, 1979). The lack of one parent in the family tends to influence the behavior patterns of children. Children from broken families pre-maturely take on adult worries at home most of the time they are at odds with their school roles. They tend not to burden the single parents with their feelings or

problems. The male children tend to play the fatherly and girls motherly role in the family. This affects their access, retention and performance (Triano, 1990; Brown, 1980).

This study established that some school-related factors affect primary school access and retention in Gatanga District. These include indiscipline among pupils, poor or non-existent guidance, student-teacher conflict, overloaded curriculum, indiscipline; among staff, bad school-community relations and poor school administration. For example, in the case of the provision of guidance and counseling services, most of the pupils who dropped out had not been counseled prior to the withdrawal.

Available studies (Combs & Cooley, 1968; Livondo, 1992; Natuello, 1994) indicate that school related factors particularly inefficient school administration significantly influence on the school climate and can therefore predict pupils' retention in schools. According to Brunk (1984); Usher and Elsob (1978) and Kelleganan (1980) the school administration shapes interactions in the school involving teachers, parents and pupils and therefore has a direct bearing on early school leaving. When the school administration rewards teachers for academic achievements and excellence co-curricular activities, they (teachers and pupils) value discipline and scholastic achievements (Okendeu, 1978; Lane, 1987; Rumberger, 1987; Sifuna, 1987; Weng, 1988). School discipline ensures that pupils stay longer in school until completion. On the other hand, school indiscipline contributes to increased cases of absenteeism and dropout rates (Mbiti, 1981; Castle, 1996; Njeru & Orodho, 1999).

According to UNESCO (1998) a good curriculum is relevant to individual needs or learners in their social, traditional and geographical settings. An overloaded curriculum may lead to low retention, stress pupils and this may lead to indiscipline such as truancy which ultimately leads premature withdrawal of pupils from primary schools (World Bank, 1992; UNESCO, 1998). An overloaded curriculum leads repetition with frustrated pupils opting to quit school (Rumberger, 1987). Still, some learners opt to drop out of school when there is lack of connection between what they are taught and everyday life (Curle, 1973). The study's findings indicate that primary school access and retention in Gatanga District is affected by a number of student-related factors such as peer group influence, indiscipline, poor health, pregnancy, marriage, poor academic

performance, absenteeism, age (adolescence), lack of interest in school work and student cognitive ability. It emerged that educational disability was not a major factor contributing dropout rates. Interestingly, majority of the pupils who withdrew had ever been suspended.

Disaffection and lack of enthusiasm among pupils in many countries undoubtedly contributes to low levels of retention and completion (Dean, 1987; Ngau, 1991). Lack of career guidance contributes to increased dropout rates (Makinde, 1984; Avert, 1998). Sifuna (1998) observes that many youth who leave school are unaware of the occupation opportunities. Dove (1972) observes that the apparent lack of awareness possible occupations makes pupils make poor choices in life because teachers in less industrialized countries do not discuss issues that are not in the syllabus. This ignorance on career opportunities created by a lack of career guidance in schools prompted the Koech report to recommend establishment of guidance and counseling programmes in schools and make senior teachers responsible (Republic of Kenya, 1998).

Peer groups often have their own set of rules and norms and where these conflict with, or are different from those of the individual family or wider society (Charton and George, 1993). Peer group influence influence repetition and premature withdrawal from school (Wanjohi, 2001). Castle (1966) observes that pupils develop a feeling of independence as they approach adolescence age. They develop a sense of assertion which leads to anxiety and restlessness. They want to be left alone to explore the world, but schools do not provide a lee way to explore because of rigidity, hence creating conflict. Most schools lack qualified staff to cater for pupils' adolescent stage hence they feel neglected and play truancy (Buyengo, 1966; Obae, 1990).

Pupils' level of performance is directly linked to their state of health which includes a sound mind a body free of diseases and other deformities. Diseases affect their learning abilities or even being involved in accidents might severely reduce their cognitive abilities. Such pupils end up dropping out of school as they are no longer able to cope with the demands of the education system (Wolf, 2002; Nyawara, 2007). The study's findings indicate that community-related factors that affect primary school retention in Gatanga District. These factors include work availability, security, lack of good schools and health and other social services.

Rural areas are characterized by low access and retention as compared to urban areas because it is easier to access schools in urban areas as compared to rural areas (RoK, 2003). Abagi (1997) notes that boys opt to engage in income-generating activities to supplement family income instead of going to school. Besides, the community encourages school-going children to engage in ceremonies such as circumcisions, weddings and other social gatherings within their localities, thus contributing to low access and retention rates. Communities can influence access and retention by providing employment opportunities during school. Often, the likelihood of dropping out increases with the number of hours worked (Rumberger, 1983).

#### **5.4. Conclusion of the study**

The contribution by the government in providing the primary school with free primary education policy has greatly contributed in the welfare of the pupils and has really helped the pupils in progressing from one class to the other. Provision of physical facilities in schools; ensure that the pupils get total comfort during their school time. As well takes part in improving the talents like the sportsmen and women, athletics, artists among others. On the same they get a chance to learn more skills like farming. The physical facilities that are provided under FPE include classrooms, playgrounds, school gardens, toilets, water, electricity among others School equipment range from games equipments, instruments, all kinds of tools used in schools, books, pencils, chalks, computers, radio set among others. These equipment ensure learning gets moving in school and pupils gets fully engaged in co-curricular activities.

Free primary education programme also deals with provision of services to the schools. These services like transport wages for support staff, security, telephone services, has played a great role in ensuring that the school activities run as expected by the ministry of education. Therefore, this study concludes that the government intervention in providing funding for the primary school pupils has helped reduce the burden which was being felt by the parents in paying fees for all the pupils and schools need and which that used to hinder retention of primary school pupils.



These facilities are designed built, constructed, installed or provided to the schools in the primary school institutions so that they could that create convenience in delivering service to the pupils. There making it easy for the pupils to learn and as well the teachers to teach and that improves retention of pupils.

### **5.5. Recommendations of the study**

Based on the findings, the researcher recommends the following:

- i. The government should increase the funds allocated for FPE so that retention rates for pupils in public primary schools can be increased. This is based on the evidence that provision of better facilities, materials and services under FPE reduce school dropout rates;
- ii. Quality assurance officers in Gatanga should be more vibrant in supervising the management of public primary schools as well as the administration of the curriculum. This would go a long way in ensuring that pupils are retained in schools as they are able to derive quality; and
- iii. Schools in Gatanga should strengthen their guidance and counseling departments which play a key role in keeping pupils in school despite the challenges brought about by the shortcomings of FPE; and

For further research;

- i. Similar studies could be replicated elsewhere in other parts of the country as this study was carried out in one district only; and
- ii. A study could be carried to find out whether there is a relationship between the lack of guidance and counseling and the rising dropout rates in Gatanga District.

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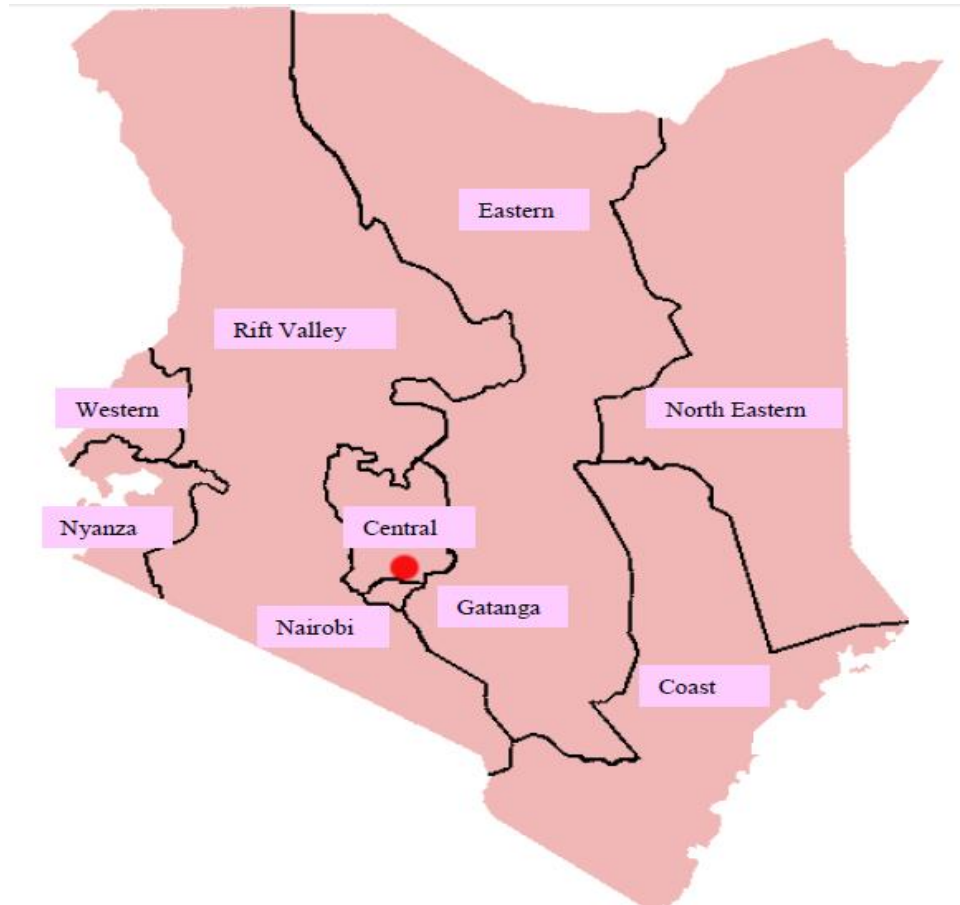
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## APPENDICES

### Appendix I: The Position of Gatanga in the former system of government (Provincial Administration)





## Appendix 3: QUESTIONNAIRE

### Part i: General Information

1. What is your age bracket?

18-25 ( )

26-35 ( )

36-45 ( )

46-55 ( )

55 and above ( )

2. What is your gender?

Male ( )

Female ( )

3. What is your marital status?

Married ( )

Not Married ( )

Widow/widower ( )

No response ( )

4. What is your highest education level?

None ( )

Primary ( )

Secondary ( )

College ( )

University ( )

5. Present Occupation í í í í í í í í í í í í í í í í í ..

6. How many years have you served in this position?

Less than a year ( )

> one but < two years ( )

> two but < five ( )

> five but < 10 ( )

> ten ( )

Other. . . . . ( )





**Part iv: Provision of school equipment and pupils retention in school**

7. Here are a series of equipments and that are commonly cited as determinants of primary school access and retention. Using a scale of 1 to 5 where "5" is strongly agree, "4" is agree, "3" is neutral, "2" is disagree and "1" is strongly disagree, how do you rate each of the following? Please, put a check mark (X) in the appropriate cell.

<b>Equipment &amp; stationery</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>agree</b>	<b>Undecided</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
Textbooks					
ICT materials					
desks					
Sanitary towels					
Radio set					
Sports gear					

**Part v: Provision of services and pupils retention in school**

8. Here are two services that are cited as determinants of primary school access and retention. Using a scale of 1 to 5 where "5" is strongly agree, "4" is agree, "3" is neutral, "2" is disagree and "1" is strongly disagree, how do you rate each of the following? Please, put a check mark (X) in the appropriate cell.

<b>Physical facilities</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>agree</b>	<b>Undecided</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
transport					
Wages for support staff					

**Part V: Poverty level in relation to pupils retention in school**

9. Here are a series of poverty level factors that are commonly cited as determinants of primary school retention. Using a scale of 1 to 5 where "5" is strongly agree, "4" is agree, "3" is neutral, "2" is disagree and "1" is strongly disagree, how do you rate each of the following? Please, put a check mark (X) in the appropriate cell.

<b>Poverty level</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>agree</b>	<b>Undecided</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
Unemployment					
Number of people without food (receiving relief food)					
Poverty gap ratio					
Income of less than \$1 per day					

**Part 6: Conclusion**

- 1) Do you feel that what is allocated under FPE is enough to provide the required physical facilities, services, equipment and facilitation of teachersø work?

í  
í  
í  
í  
í  
í .

- 2) What can you generally say about FPE and academic performance in Gatanga?

í  
í  
í  
í  
í  
í ...

- 3) What are your final comments?

í  
í  
í  
í  
í í í í í í í í .

## Appendix 4: List of Participants

### 1. Ithanga Zone

- Kirathani
- Kaguku
- Mugumo
- Mianyani
- Thungururu

### 2. Kakuzi Zone

- Gituamba
- Kinyangi
- Nanga
- Thuthua

### 3. Mugumo-Ini Zone

- Mwingiri,
- Gathambara
- Mugumoini
- Kigio
- Mithandukuini

### 4. Kihumbu-Ini Zone

- Kagongo
- Gituamba
- Kihumbuini
- Nyaga
- Kiunyu

**5. Gatanga Zone**

- Chomo
- Kirwara And
- Mabanda
- Mureke
- Gathanji

**6. Kariara Zone**

- Gatura,
- Mbugiti
- Ndaka-Ini
- Karangi
- Giachuki

#### **Appendix 4: Letter of Introduction**

Mathu Winfred Nyambura,  
The University Of Nairobi,  
Department of Open and Distance Learning,  
P.O. Box 30197-00100,  
NAIROBI.

Dear respondent,

**RE: QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE INFLUENCE OF FREE PRIMARY EDUCATION ON THE PUPILS RETENTION RATE: THE CASE OF GATANGA DISTRICT, MURANGA COUNTY**

I am a postgraduate student at the University of Nairobi pursuing a masters degree in Project Planning and Management. I am carrying out a research on the influence of free primary education on the pupils' retention rate: the case of Gatanga District, Muranga County.

The attached questionnaire is aimed at gathering relevant information about your school in connection to the area under research. Your response will be held in strict confidence. Please complete all the sections as objectively as possible. Your co-operation will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully,

Winfred Nyambura Mathu