

ABSTRACT

Studies that have targeted creating children's rights awareness have placed a lot of emphasis on the influence of children's rights awareness on various stakeholders at the expense of the effects attributed to various aspects of a child's or student's life. The purpose of the study was to investigate the influence of children's rights awareness on students' performance in Gatundu North District, Kiambu County, Kenya. Four research questions guided the researcher namely: to what extent is there children's rights awareness among secondary schools; which are the commonly violated children's rights in secondary schools; what is the influence of children's rights awareness on students' behaviour and academic performance in secondary schools; and what ways can enhance children's rights awareness in secondary schools in Gatundu North District, Kiambu County. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design to carry out the study.

The study targeted 31 secondary schools, 31 principals of schools, 620 teachers and 12,400 students. The study had a sample size of 124 students, 62 teachers, 9 principals a D.E.O and DQASO. This gave a total sample of 197 respondents. A total of 108 students, 50 teachers, 8 principals, a D.E.O and a DQASO participated in the study. Schools were stratified as either private or public secondary schools. Systematic random sampling was used to sample out the students and the teachers. Purposive sampling was used to sample out the principals, DQASO and D.E.O. The data collection instruments used included questionnaire for teachers and students and an interview guide for the principals, DQASO and DEO. Document analysis was used to gather data on students' academic performance. Data was analyzed using SPSS Version 16 Computer Package and excel and presented using frequency tables and percentages. From the analysis the study found out the following: there is child rights awareness among various stakeholders in secondary schools though the awareness level varies from each group. Children's rights are observed and exercised in all secondary schools in the district. The main sources of information on children's rights among students include the school, television, radio, newspapers and magazines. The documents that advocate for child rights like the universal declaration of human rights and the child rights convention were considered alien to the students. There is violation of children's rights in some schools though this was disputed greatly by teachers. Students' discipline is positively or negatively influenced by awareness of child rights among students in schools. Teachers do not believe that awareness of children's rights has an influence on academic performance of the students. Most schools in the district attained a mean grade of D plain in KCSE. Ways of enhancing child rights awareness were established to be fourfold; those that address initiatives at a student's level, school level, community level and at the government level. In order to enhance children's rights awareness in there is need for teachers to change their attitude and all stakeholders in school should team up for the success of the initiative.