

**SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS INFLUENCING FEMALE STUDENTS'
RETENTION IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MUKAA SUB-COUNTY,
MAKUENI COUNTY, KENYA**

JACINTA WAYUA NZINA

E55-7360-2016

**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION IN
PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF
MASTERS DEGREE IN EDUCATIONAL PLANNING OF MACHAKOS
UNIVERSITY**

OCTOBER 2019

DECLARATION

This project is my original work and has not been presented for the award of a degree in this or any other university.

Signature

Date

Jacinta Wayua Nzina

Reg. No. E55-7360-2016

This project has been submitted for examination with our approval as University

Supervisors:

Signature

Date

Dr. Richard Kimiti

Senior Lecturer,

Department of Educational Management and Curriculum Studies

Machakos University

Signature

Date

Dr. David Mulwa

Senior Lecturer,

Department of Educational Management and Curriculum Studies

Machakos University

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this work to my dear husband, David Muendo Kimenye, and our children; Jane, Jonathan, James, Japheth and Joel.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, I thank the Almighty God for giving me good health, grace and brilliant mind.

To go through this course, it is really the doing of the lord. I sincerely acknowledge my Supervisors, Dr. Richard Kimiti and Dr. David Mulwa of Machakos University who have been instrumental in the success of my studies in the university.

I also acknowledge my other lecturers; Dr. Kasivu and Dr. Ivita who have been a valuable source of experience to me. Special mention goes to the Kasikeu boys' family; the staff and the students, for their continuous moral support and encouragement in my studies.

Special thanks goes to my husband, David and our children; Jane, Jonathan, James, Japheth and Joel for their great support, endurance and patience as I spent most of my free time in books doing research work. I sincerely appreciate their understanding and encouragement. Finally, I thank my pastor, Helen John Musyimi, for her continuous prayers and encouragement during the time of my studies.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

| | |
|----------------|---|
| APA | American Psychological Association |
| ASAL | Arid and Semi-Arid Lands |
| BOM | Board of Management |
| ECDE | Early Childhood Development and Education |
| EFA | Education for All |
| FDSE | Free Day Secondary Education |
| KCSE | Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education |
| NACOSTI | National Commission of Science, Technology and Innovation |
| PTA | Parents Teachers Association |
| ROK | Republic of Kenya |
| SDGs | Sustainable Development Goals |
| SPSS | Statistical Package for Social Sciences |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| UNICEF | United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund |

ABSTRACT

Education for females has been widely valued across the world. Since independence female students' retention in schools has been found to be a major challenge in Kenya. Socio-economic factors have been highlighted as of great importance in influencing the retention of female students in secondary schools World Wide. This study therefore investigated the influence of socio-economic factors on female students' retention in public secondary schools in Mukaa Sub-county, Makueni County. The purpose of this study was to establish the extent to which socio-economic factors influence female students' retention in public secondary school in Mukaa Sub-county, Makueni County, Kenya. The study was guided by the following objectives; to establish the influence of family financial status on female students' retention in public secondary schools in Mukaa Sub-county, to determine the influence of parent's educational level on female students' retention in public secondary schools in Mukaa Sub county, to establish the influence of family size on female students' retention in public secondary schools in Mukaa Sub-county and to establish the influence of parents' marital status on the female students' retention in public secondary schools in Mukaa Sub-county . The study was guided by the Systems Theory of Management. The study employed descriptive survey research design. The study was carried out in Mukaa Sub-county, Makueni County, Kenya. The researcher only targeted girls' public secondary schools and mixed public secondary schools in Mukaa Sub- County. The target population of the study therefore comprised of: 37 principals, 50 form four class teachers and 1,240 form four female students in public secondary schools in Mukaa Sub-county. Stratified Sampling Technique was used to group public secondary schools in Mukaa Sub –County into County schools and Sub-County schools. The researcher used simple random sampling to select 3 County schools out of 8 and 9 Sub-County schools out of 29. Simple random sampling was also used to select 12 principals, 15 class teachers and 124 form four female students. Therefore, the sample size consisted of; 12 principals, 15 form four class teachers and 124 female students in form four. Questionnaires and documentary analysis were used to collect the data. The quantitative data was coded and entered using SPSS version 24 computer software. Descriptive statistics specifically percentage and frequency were used for analysis and data was presented in tables and graphs. From the study it was established that; family financial status influence female students' retention to a great extent as indicated by 72.7% of the teachers and principals, parents' education level influence female students' retention to a great extent as indicated by 54.5%, family size influence female students' retention to a great extent as indicated by 68.2% and parents' marital status influence students' retention to a great extent as indicated by 59.0%of the teachers and principals. The study concludes that most female students drop out of school because of their parents' poor financial status, high academic attainment of parents significantly reduces chances of female students' secondary school dropout, students from large families may drop out to give others a chance to acquire basic and female students brought up by both parents have high chances of completing secondary education. This study recommends that: communities should be empowered to alleviate poverty and enable families increase their income, government should conduct awareness and sensitization campaign on importance of family planning, parents should be sensitized to fully understand the importance of completion of secondary education and government should enforce parental laws to ensure children do not fall victim to family instability.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Globally, education is highly valued and recognized as a basic human right for every child. According to United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, every child has a right for education (UNESCO, 2009). According to Republic of Kenya (ROK), education contributes to National development through provision of human resource that helps to increase production and eliminate poverty, disease and ignorance (ROK, 2015). In relation to other factors of production, education attainment is economically becoming more important as it leads to the transformation of other resources to enhance civil and better livelihoods among communities (Psacharopoulos & Patrinos, 2004). Education plays a very important part in; improving productive capacity of the society, reducing poverty by mitigating its effects on population, health and nutrition (Boit, Njoki & Chang`ach, 2012). For this reason many countries have implemented free basic education programmes and also recognize that education plays a significant role in economic growth of nations.

The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) gave a report that huge amounts of government expenditures around the world are on education (UNICEF 2011). Education is recognized as the most important factor for social, cultural, political and economic development in a country. Across the world, education is recognized as the basis for training human capital to serve in various economic sectors (Psacharopoulos & Patrinos, 2004). The economic development of a country is largely

determined by the literacy level in that country. The intellectualism of people in a country determines the power of a successful nation. Literacy seriously affects both industrial and economic growth for a country (Downes, 1998). The realization of the importance of educational development in many countries has led to many of them putting a lot of effort to provide Free Secondary Education (UNESCO, 2016).

In Europe, education was already free by 1994 (Szirmal, 2005) Payments for the sports, teachers' salaries and provision of exams were by the governments of European countries. However, cost-sharing was introduced because the governments could not solely continue funding education due to inflation and this led to dropout. Introduction of Free Primary Education (FPE) in Uganda by the government led to increase in enrolment. The same occurred with introduction of free Secondary education in 2007 (Bategeka, Muhumuza & Ssewanyana, 2005). However, inadequate number of teachers and lack of classrooms was not matched to the increased enrolment and therefore dropout cropped in again. In Tanzania, the situation was the same where quality standards declined when FPE was introduced by the government at all stages of basic education.

In Kenya introduction of FPE and Free Day Secondary Education (FDSE) in 2003 and 2008 respectively also led to increase in enrolment. This resulted to lack of enough teachers and inadequate facilities and drop cropped in again. Providing women with education is vital in any country (Owouth, 2010). According to UNICEF (2015), none discriminating education benefits both male and female students and contributes to more equal relationship between man and women. Ensuring equality of access to education and retention of female students is necessary if more women are to become agents of change.

According to World Bank (2012), literacy of women is an important key to improve health, nutrition and education in the family and to empower women to participate in decision making in the society. Investing in formal and non-formal education and training for female students and women, has high social and economic returns and has proved to be one of the best means in achieving sustainable development and economic returns (UNICEF, 2015). Equipping female students with education leads to more equitable development, stronger families better services, child health and effective participation in governance.

Research conducted by World Bank group proved that education of women leads to; improved nutritional values, proper hygiene and improved management of households (World Bank, 2014). The report puts it clearly that girls with little or no education are far more likely to be married as children, suffer from domestic violence, live in poverty and lack a say over household spending or their own health care than better educated peers. Female education leads to; improved health and education, reduced infant mortality, higher earning, reduced fertility rate and general improvement of quality of life for nations. Several cultural beliefs and customs discourage high women education because of their role in the family but education changes women attitude towards their own role in both the household and in work place. Education helps women to have a wider range of options for economic activities (Zhan & Sherraden, 2003). Although there are many benefits associated with women education, most developing countries, Kenya included, are still analyzing their situation so as to develop programmes to address female education (Wang, 2003). In 2008, the Kenyan government launched Vision 2030 which

was aimed at transforming Kenya into a newly industrialized middle income country by the year 2030. To realize this, the Ministry of Education was given mandate to reduce illiteracy by increasing access to education, retention and improving the transition rates from primary to secondary school. Therefore, Kenya was to increase funding to support schools by increasing enrolment and retaining the learners (ROK, 2015). The government of Kenya has shown commitment to the provision of quality education and training through introduction of FPE and FDSE in 2003 and 2008 respectively. This was done to enhance retention of learners in schools hence increasing literacy level in the country. Despite the government financing education, school dropouts are still there (Andvig, 2010). This means even with good and timely funding, retention may be limited by socio- economic factors in the environment. Therefore, despite the introduction of free day secondary education, dropouts are there.

Report from the 2018 education quality dialogues presented by the Ministry of Education shows that, Kenya has made great efforts in achieving Education for All (EFA). From the report, participation in Early Childhood Development and Education (ECDE) has increased from 64.2% in 2012 to 74.9% in 2016. The primary education enrolment has also risen from 88% in 2012 to 91.2% in 2016. The report also says that close to 85% of learners who complete standard eight make it to secondary schools. Secondary schools enrolment rose from 41.7% in 2012 to 49.5% in 2016. The increased access to education, improved enrolment and transition rates, has caused a rise on concerns on the retention of the students in secondary schools. In most developed and developing countries, success has been adequately recorded in expansion of learning spaces and opportunities. This is

mainly due to high resource allocation in the education sector. However, high rate of wastage is a challenge especially among the low socio-economic population. The increasing cost of living is directly attributed to high rate of dropout (Psacharopoulos & Patrinos, 2004). Family socio-economic level influence retention of female students in school. Some parents cannot keep their children in school even though they wish to do so because of their level of income (World Bank, 2003). Parents who have smaller households are able to monitor and regulate the activities of their children. Large family size reduces the chances of parents' participation in the academic life of all children and that can lead to low retention rate.

The important role played by the secondary school education has caused many governments to desire to decrease dropouts in secondary schools. This has led to heavy public and private investment in education (UNESCO, 2003). Secondary education is a very important sector for national and individual development in any country. It plays an important role in increasing country's human resource base at a higher level than primary education sector (Ohba, 2009). Since independence, the government of Kenya has been concerned with enhancing female student's retention in secondary schools (Sifuna, 2013). This has been done through providing legal and fiscal framework besides advocacy through various campaigns that mitigate against dropout. Female students' retention is a great concern to the family, society and government. For this reason, for any educational institution to succeed, students' retention should be considered important. Students' retention rate indicates the percentage of the students who remain at an educational institution after they begin studying there. High retention indicates that the institution is

supportive to the students (Ozga, 2000). In any educational institution high students' retention attracts high students' academic achievement while low students retention discourages student from performing. Retention affects students, the institution and the society. For the students, in ability to cope with demands of educational institution lower self-confidence and self-esteem and in most cases leads to negative lifelong economic impact. For the institution low retention is considered as wastage of institution resources. Failure of the institution to retain students in school damages the reputation of an institution creating long term implications for attracting new students (Ozga, 2000). When female students drop out of the school, they do not achieve their full potential and therefore there is wastage of talents not only for the students but also for the society at large. Also students' development through further education is greatly affected.

There are large differentials between secondary school entry rates and secondary school completion rates especially for female students. The current average national completion rate for girls is at 75.3% and that of boys is at 81.06% (2018 Education Quality Dialogues). School dropout for female students is a global phenomenon (Alika & Egbochuku, 2009). Socio-economic factors discourage already enrolled female students from continuing with further studies. The government of Kenya calls for affirmative action to enhance women participation in education and other areas of employment (ROK, 2015). Mukaa sub-county has registered female students dropouts from 2011 as indicated below. According to the statistics from the sub-county education office, average dropout rates between 2011 and 2015 are at 11.33% for boys and 14.48% for girls.

Table 1.1: Enrolment and completion of female students in Mukaa sub-county 2011-2018

| Form 1 | | Form 4 | | Dropout rate for female |
|---------------|------------------|---------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| Year | Enrolment | Year | Completion | students |
| 2011 | 1,015 | 2014 | 928 | 8.57% |
| 2012 | 1,137 | 2015 | 943 | 17.06% |
| 2013 | 1,197 | 2016 | 1,077 | 10.03% |
| 2014 | 1,333 | 2017 | 1,103 | 17.25% |
| 2015 | 1,362 | 2018 | 1,118 | 17.91% |

Source: Mukaa Sub-County Director of Education, 2018.

The difference between the numbers of female students who enrolled in form one and those who graduated four years later can be used to calculate the dropout rate of the students. From the above table, it is clearly shown that there is an increasing trend of dropout rate for female students in Mukaa Sub-County since 2011. This is now an area of concern in Mukaa Sub-County and therefore measures should be taken to ensure retention of female students in this area. Failing to retain female students in secondary schools leads to dropouts. Dropout can be considered as a waste of potential human resources and money spend on them in primary education and even time lost in sending them to school in the first place. Every secondary school female student dropout signifies unfulfilled objectives, goals and aim of individual as well as the society at large. Despite the Government's efforts to offer FDSE and subsidized secondary education, the retention rate in Mukaa Sub-County is not 100%. Retention of female students in secondary schools is a major challenge which is attributed majorly by socio-economic factors. This

research is aimed to determine the extent to which socio-economic factors influence retention of female students in Mukaa Sub -County.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Sustainable Development Goal number-5 (Gender Equality) emphasizes on Promoting gender equality and empowering women and girls. The only way to promote gender equality and empower women socially, economically and politically is through provision of education. Providing quality education for women helps to meet some other SDGs such as; achieving universal primary education, reducing child mortality and improving maternal health. However, National educational system has been characterized by gender disparities at National level and between various regions in favour for males (ROK, 2007). Female students who do not complete secondary school education are likely to suffer from functional illiteracy.

Illiteracy hinders National development of the country, a factor which is one of Kenya's educational objectives. Illiteracy also hinders the government from building a human capital base which is essential for development in the country. The government of Kenya is working very hard to ensure learners at secondary school level remain in school by allocating a great percentage of Kenya budget to the education sector. Despite the enormous financial contribution by the government, Kenya experiences high school dropout for female students and therefore it is necessary to work towards retention of female students in secondary schools (Sifuna, 2013). According to the Republic of Kenya/ UNESCO (2015), girls are more disadvantaged gender in access and performance

in education in Kenya. Therefore, the researcher undertook a study to diagnose this problem of girls' low retention in Mukaa Sub-County with a view to propose some intervention strategies. Female students' retention in secondary schools is also a concern in Mukaa sub-county despite the government efforts to offer FSDE and subsidized secondary education. In Mukaa Sub-county dropout for girls is at 14.48% and for boys is at 11.33% (Mukaa Sub-County Education Office).

Studies conducted by scholars on retention of female students in public secondary schools have consistently shown that socio-economic factors contribute to female students' school dropouts (UNICEF, 2011). Such studies have been done in specific regions such as North eastern and coast provinces (UNICEF, 2011). However, similar studies have not been carried out on the effect of socio economic factors on retention of girl child in Mukaa Sub County. This creates a gap in investigation of Mukaa Sub County as an area that is affected by socio-economic factors. Therefore, given this scenario, there is need for in depth investigation on the socio-economic factors influencing female students' retention in public secondary schools in Mukaa Sub-county.

1.3 The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the extent to which socio-economic factors influence female students' retention in public secondary schools in Mukaa sub-county, Makueni County, Kenya.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

This study was guided by the following objectives;

- (i) To establish the influence of family financial status on female students' retention in public secondary schools in Mukaa Sub-county.
- (ii) To determine the influence of parent's education level on female students' retention in public secondary schools in Mukaa Sub-county.
- (iii) To establish the influence of family size on female students' retention in public secondary schools in Mukaa Sub-county.
- (iv) To establish the influence of parents' marital status on the female students' retention in public secondary school in Mukaa Sub-county.

1.5 Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study;

- (i) What is the influence of family financial status on female students' retention in public secondary schools in Mukaa Sub-county?
- (ii) What is the influence of parents' educational level on female students' retention in public secondary schools in Mukaa Sub-county?
- (iii) What is the influence of family size on female student's retention in public secondary schools in Mukaa Sub-county?
- (iv) What is the influence of parents' marital status on female students' retention in public secondary schools in Mukaa Sub- County?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study may be useful to several groups of people in Mukaa Sub-county and outside. First, the finding of this study might assist the school management and educational officers in Mukaa Sub-county to re-think the strategies to use to address the problem of low retention of female students in Mukaa Sub-county. Secondly, to the Ministry of Education, the findings might aid policy formulators to develop ways and means of curbing the problem of female students' dropout and hence increase retention.

Third, the parents might also benefit from this study because, the outcome may assist their children to remain in school and complete secondary education and hence no wastage of their resources. Fourth, the findings of the study might give parents light on the problems affecting their daughters and help them to come up with solutions that can promote female students education. Fifth, the finding of this study might assist the teachers to be in a better position in addressing the socio-economic factors which influence female students' retention in secondary schools. Sixth, the learners might also benefit from the research finding because they will be able to re-think ways of dealing with socio-economic challenges which affect their studies. Finally, the research finding might be used as reference and basis by scholars, academicians and researchers who might be interested to pursue this area further.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

First, the study was limited to Mukaa Sub-County and therefore the findings are only inferred to Counties and Sub-Counties with similar characteristics. Secondly, availability of principals and teachers was a challenge due to their busy schedule. The researcher

booked appointment with the teachers and principals earlier which resulted to escalation of response rate. Thirdly, some principals and teachers were unavailable due to being off duty or sickness since the research was conducted during working hours. To overcome this challenge, the researcher made a follow up of the principals and teachers and administered the questionnaires when they returned to the station although some could not be found. Finally, to access some secondary schools in Mukaa Sub-County was not easy due to poor infrastructure. To overcome this challenge, the researcher used motorbike bodaboda to penetrate in those areas.

1.8 Delimitations of the Study

The study was confined to public girls' secondary schools and mixed secondary school in Mukaa Sub-County. The study focused on the socio- economic factors that influence female students' retention under the following components; family financial status, parents' educational level, family size and parent's marital status. The study respondents included; principals, form four class teachers and female students in form four in public secondary schools in Mukaa Sub-County. The study used questionnaires and documentary analysis to collect data. The study was narrowed to the 12 principals, 15 form four class teachers and 124 form four female students in Mukaa Sub-County.

1.9 Assumptions of the Study

The study was carried out on the assumption that all respondents would give genuine and honest responses of their perceptions, feelings and judgments to the items in the questionnaire. The study also assumed that the respondents would be available during the period of data collection and would conform to all the condition set for the study. Finally,

the study assumed that low retention rate of female students in public secondary schools is associated with socio-economic factors.

1.10 Theoretical Framework

This study was based on the Systems Theory of Management. Systems Theory was proposed by Ludwing Van Bertalanffy in 1928 (Weihrich et al, 2008). This theory was improved by other scholars such as; Gibson et al (1997), Mullin (2005), Weihrich et al (2008) and Scott (2008). The proponent of this theory was making an attempt to justify efficient in operations of an organization as a system (Weihrich et al, 2008). Systems theory of management offers an alternative approach to the planning and management of organization. The systems theory proposes that, organizations like the human body consists of multiple components that work harmoniously so that the larger system can function optimally. According to this theory, the success of an organization depends on several key elements (Mullin, 2005). According to this theory, an organization is viewed as a social system consisting of individuals who cooperate within the formal framework, drawing resources, people and finance from the environment Scott (2008).

An educational institution is an organization and according to Systems Theory it is a social system that does only depend on its environment but it is also part of the larger system such as society. Schools are social systems in which two or more people work together in a coordinated manner to attain common goals (Scott, 2008).

Different actors in an educational system influence decision making. For example, school committee, head teacher, teachers and parents make certain decisions and give opinions

on management of the school. The theory argues that school organization is a complex social system where analysis of the constituent elements in isolation cannot give its properties (Mullin, 2005). In this theory, it is assumed that all systems are purposeful and goal directed. Therefore, the school system exists to achieve objectives through the larger community in the institutional setting. According to this theory, for effective management of retention of female students, emphasis should shift from part to whole. It is emphasized that different factors that influence female students' retention must be managed together. Paying attention to all factors that influence female students' retention will help to produce a common goal (high retention).

Schools are open systems and therefore respond to the external influence as they attempt to achieve objectives (Scott, 2008). In a school system, the inputs go through a process where they are planned, organized, motivated and controlled to meet the objectives. Inefficient in a school system results when there is a mismatch between inputs, processes and outputs. In a school system, socio-economic factors are inputs while female students' retention is one of most desirable output. To ensure the female students participate in schooling and complete their secondary school education successfully, school system should play roles effectively. Parents and the society are part of the school system and have a duty to ensure that female students attend and continue with learning without disturbance. This can be achieved through: paying school fees, creating a conducive environment at home and becoming good role models to the learners. This theory is applicable in this study because it reveals the school as a social system which is often affected by other systems in the environment. Other systems in the environment which

affect school system include; families where the students are drawn, churches which students attend and the entire society. What happens in the family system affects the school systems e.g. decrease in finances, breaking of marriage, additional siblings and unemployment. The socio-economic factors are the input and the female students' retention is the output. Using this theory, the study sought to explore the socio-economic factors that influence female students' retention in public secondary schools in Mukaa Sub-County.

1.11 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of the study is based on the related literature to the study. The independent variables are the socio-economic factors which include; family financial status, parent's educational level, size of the family and parents' marital status. The retention of the female students is the dependent variable. Socio-economic factors influence the retention of female students. However, there are other intervening variables that intervene between socio- economic factors and retention of female students in public secondary schools. Such factors include: Government policies, cultural practices and guidance and counseling. The variables of the study are conceptualized as shown in figure below.

Independent Variables

Dependent Variable

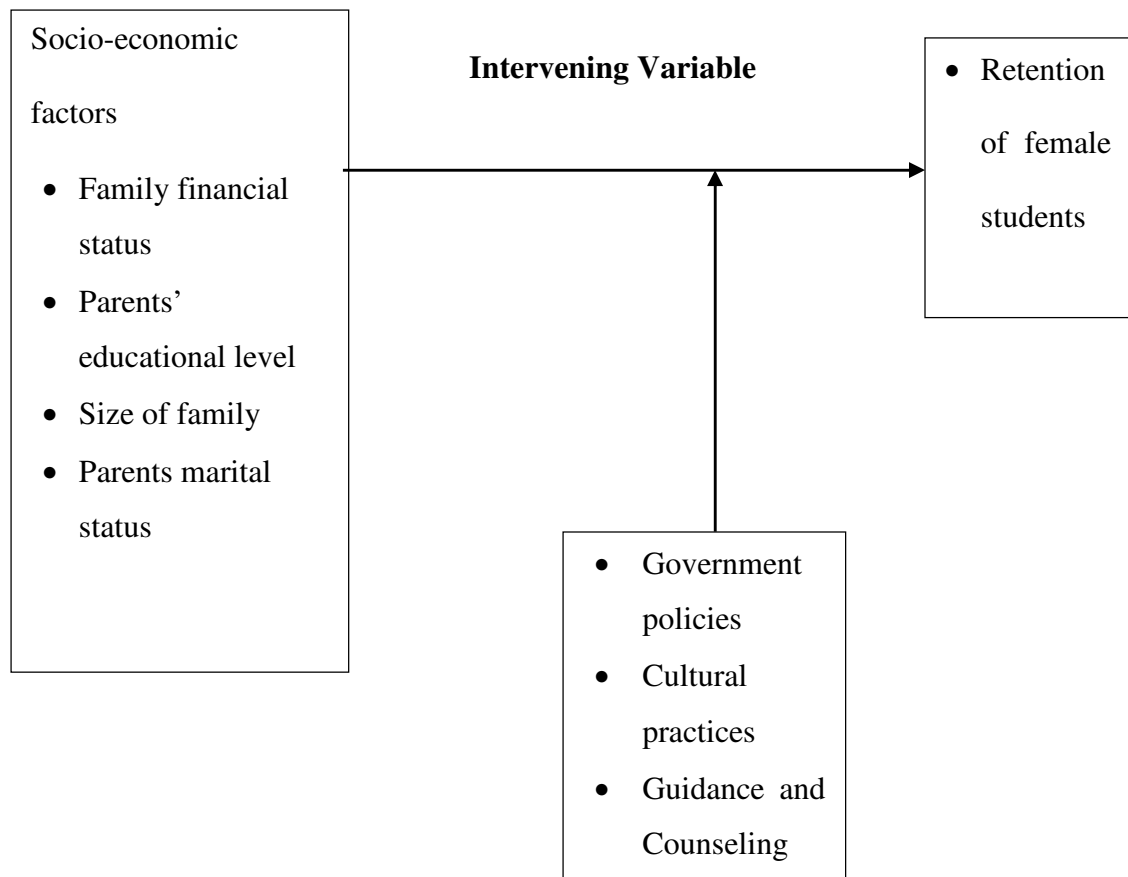


Figure 1.1: A conceptual framework showing relationship between socio-economic factors and female students retention

Source: Researcher (2019)

From the related literature, high socio-economic status of the family, high level of education of the parents, small family size and married parents results to conducive home environment which leads into high retention of female students in public secondary schools.

1.12 Operational Definitions of Terms

Family financial status–Refers to family’s ranking in the society in terms of income

Family size – Refers to the total number of people in a family including father, mother and children

Female students – Refers to female learners in secondary schools

Parents’ level of education – Refers to the highest level of education attained by the Parents

Parents’ marital status – refers to whether the parent is married, divorced, single or widowed

Retention of female students – Refers to the ability of the female student to remain and participate in school activities up to the end of the cycle.

Socio-economic factors – refers to an individuals’ or family’s ranking on a hierarchy according to its access to or control over some combination of valued commodities such as; wealth, power and social status.

Wastage – refers to a situation in which students do not complete secondary school education with their group or drop out of school.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The chapter focuses on; the overview of female students' retention in public secondary schools, influence of family financial status on female student's retention in public secondary school, influence of parents educational status on female students' retention in public secondary school, influence of family size on female students, retention public secondary schools and influence of parents marital status on female students retention in public secondary schools. Summary and research gaps are also covered in this chapter.

2.2 Female Students' Retention in Public Secondary School in Kenya

For decades, female students' retention has been studied with a variety of research and conclusion made on factors that influence female students' retention and success in secondary schools. Retention of the students in secondary schools is measured by the completion rate. Completion rate is the proportions of those students who enroll in form one and complete the four years cycle of post primary education and sit for the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE). Low retention in secondary schools is a constraint in attaining the EFA goals (UNESCO, 2007). Although there are government policies to enhance enrolment, the female students' participation, retention, transition and completion at secondary school level are lower than that of boys (Wandiga, 2008). The National Education System has been characterized by gender disparities in Kenya (ROK, 2007). Society have different attitude towards education for boy and girls. In most communities, girls are brought up for female roles such as child bearing while boys have

a whole working life for career building. Most communities have a feeling that girls do not have qualities of independence, initiative and assertiveness (Mampele, 1994). Education for women is less developed than that of men and therefore there is need to increase female student's opportunities and promote compensatory for women at secondary and university level (Gachathi report, 1976). Generally, African countries have preference for male education. The male child is expected to work hard and excel in the world of knowledge and technology while the female child should stay at home to keep up with the live hood of the family (Mischi, 2001). Few efforts and resources are spent on girls' education since family development efforts, including schooling are invested in boys (World Bank, 2002). This is because boys are expected to be makers of the family and clans while girls are expected to be married to husbands who will speak for them. Many poor families and large families in most African communities prefer to educate boys for family continued, leadership of household and property inheritance since they belief that girls will be married and go away from their homes (UNESCO, 2003).

Report from the 2018 Education Quality Dialogues presented by the Ministry of Education shows that there is gender disparity in Kenya. From the report, gender disparity is realized as early as class six in Arid and Semi- Arid Lands (ASAL) areas. The report also cited some of the reasons for female students' drop out such as; Financial constraints, low education achievements, marriages and lack of parental involvement. Several scholars have conducted studies on factors affecting female students' retention in public secondary schools in Kenya. For instance, Noor (2003) carried out a study on accessibility and retention of girls in secondary education in North Eastern Kenya. From

the study, various reasons that prevent girls' education were pointed out. It was pointed that majority of the girls in secondary schools do not complete schools. It was also noted that the distance between home and school was a major problem for day scholars. Many parents did not allow their daughters to walk alone and this affected retention. The study did not consider specific socio-economic factors which affect retention of female students and therefore this study seeks to fill this gap.

Fuller and Lieng (2012) carried out a study on Differences in the Developmental Pathways of Female High School Graduates when Compared to Dropouts. The study concluded that the underlying reason for the girls dropping out of school was because of parents' inadequate motivation towards encouraging the daughters to study. Studies done in North Eastern Kenya indicated that, the economic activities in the area affected girls' education. Most families' practices Nomadic pastoralism. In this case families move far away from settlement areas where schools are located in search of water and pasture for their livestock. When this movement occurs, parents are forced to withdraw their girls from school (Noor, 2003). These studies only considered the socio-economic activities of the people and overlooked important factors such as; family size and parents' education level. Therefore, there is a gap to be filled by this study.

Orodho, (2009) did a study on socio-economic and cultural factors that affect access, participation and retention in secondary education in ASAL areas. The study pointed that some retrogressive socio-economic and cultural traditions, religious values and practices greatly affected students' retention in secondary schools in ASAL areas. Oywa (2012)

did a study which focused mainly in retention and completion in Suba District. From this study it was indicated that the retention for girls was very poor and even those who remained in school, their performance was wanting. This was attributed to challenges such as; early marriages, HIV/AIDS and lack of regard for girls in education. These studies did not specifically relate socio-economic factors and retention of female students in schools but gave a lot of weight to cultural factors. This study aimed at filling this gap by investigating in-depth the influence of socio-economic factors such as; family financial status, parents level of education, family size and marital status of the parents.

Chacha (2012) did a study on parameters such as access, transition and retention of girls across educational level in Gwasi. From the study it was noted that; personal characteristics, distance from home to school, family income and household chores affected girls retention throughout level of learning. This study did not consider the relationship between; educational level of the parents, family size and marital status of the parents and retention of female students in secondary schools. Therefore, this study sought to fill the gap.

Aziz (2012) did a study on academic nightmares facing Pemba in Kwale district of coast province. The study pointed out that; due to poverty, most girls kept off schools in search of live hood. Another study conducted in Tana River district found out that retention rate was very low for girls since very few complete secondary educations. Noor (2003) did a study on access and retention of girls in primary education in Wajir District Northeastern province of Kenya. From the study it was pointed that nomadic pastoralism activities

forced girls to withdraw from the school. Findings established that girls' retention rate was low compared to boys' retention rate and socio-economic factors greatly influenced female students' retention. World vision report (2011), on challenges facing girls in learning institutions in Lamu district showed that HIV/AIDs, prostitution and drugs and substance abuse were reasons for high dropout rates for girls. The above studies only considered the financial status of the parents and ignored other socio- economic factors such as; parents' education level, family size and marital status of the parents which will be considered in this study.

UNICEF path for Education for all report (2011) based on attainment of gender parity in education in schools in Sub-Saharan Africa countries showed that, most African countries have a lot of challenges in attaining this goal. As noted earlier, female education is one of the most important forces of economic and political development of a nation (UNESCO, 2007). However most developing countries are trying to analyze the situation and trying to develop programmes which address the problem of female students drop out and improve female students' retention (Wang, 2003). The wastage rate for girls is higher than that of boys. This is partially due to socio-economic factors which influence retention for female students. From the above studies, it is evident that Kenya is one of the countries where school enrolment for female children is higher at primary level and decreases as they ascend to secondary schools and institution of higher learning. However, there are processes that are used to retain female students in secondary schools. One of them is guidance and counseling departments in secondary schools. Through this department, female students from disadvantaged families are helped to adjust and continue with education. Also there are some government initiatives which safeguard the

welfare of female students in secondary schools e.g. provision of sanitary towels. This helps the female students who come from poor economic background to remain in school.

2.3. Influence of Family Financial Status on Female Students' Retention in Public Secondary Schools

The family financial background is a very important factor pertaining students' retention in secondary schools. Students from lower socio-economic background in terms of parents' occupational status face high risks of drop out (Orodho, 2014). The 2018 Education Quality Dialogue presented by the Ministry of Education, reported that students from high socio- economic background remain in school and perform better than those from low socio- economic status. The financial status of the family determines how far young people are educated with most families investing more resources in the education of boys at the expense of girls. Adrian (2010) observed that there is preference for boys to girls in terms of educational achievements. According to Amanda (2009) the financial demands for female students is higher than that of male students and therefore in families of low financial status, female students are forced to engage in some income generating activities that can lead to school dropout.

Jack (2011) carried out a study on factors influencing female students drop out in secondary schools. From the study it was concluded that female students face a lot of challenges while in learning institutions and some are frustrated when they experience financial difficulties and finally drop out of school. According to Oyunga (2011) most

girls drop out of school due to lack of adequate finances to cater for the education and social needs. Such girls get married to men who also happen to have questionable academic credential and finally bring up children who may lead a more miserable life in future hence poverty cycle. This concurred with the study carried out by Juma (2010) which pointed out that Inadequate funds in the family force more girls than boys to drop from school and start looking for financial engagements in towns. According to Wandiga (2008) majority of the females who are streaming to the beaches are from low financial status families and did not get substantial financial support for subsistence in schools and therefore dropped out. When parents in low financial status do not cater for the financial needs of their female children in learning institutions, some of them turn to prostitution and drop out of school.

Generally female students need financial support so that they are kept in schools for long to achieve the national goals (Owuoth, 2010). Rajabu (2007) concluded that most problems of female students' pregnancy are associated with low income of their parents. Parents who have low income are unable to fulfill students' needs such as uniform, stationery and lunch and as a result such students drop out of school. Children from low socio-economic family may drop out of school and engage in child labour in order to assist in earnings. This mostly affects female children. Such children spent their time working as maids and they do not have time for school. In families where resources are scarce, education for boys would be the best option and not for girls (Abagi, 1996).

According to UNESCO-UNICEP (1990) majority of financially unstable and big families prefer to educate boys for family continuity, headship of household and property inheritance since girls marry and go away from their homes. Also in poor families, the

inability to pay fees and purchase books, equipment and clothing compel parents to invest in education of their sons, whom they see as a source of future family support in preference to their daughters whose economic contribution could as well be to a different household. Therefore, the family's financial status determines who should be taken to school and also who should continue schooling and the preference are always the boys. Female students are the ones who are discontinued from school to leave room for the male students to continue with their education when the resources are inadequate to educate both of them. This is mainly because it is believed that the social benefit from boys' education has much more impact on the family decision than that from female education (Onyango, 2003). Onyango (2003) concluded that some socio-cultural norms and practices such as value attached to bride wealth influence parents of low financial status to marry off the female children before maturity hence dropping out of school. This is done in order to provide economic support in terms of bride wealth to the family. Such girls are denied opportunity for education and withdraw from schooling.

Family socio-economic status is linked to factors such as; when children start school, how often they have to withdraw for sometimes and also when and if they drop out. This was supported by Rono, (1990) who concluded that families of low economic status are likely to endorse early marriage for their female students to heighten the family's economic burdens and this becomes a reason for such girls to leave school prematurely.

From the World Bank (2009) it is also evident that during economic difficulties, parents opt to withdraw their daughters from school in the view that education for boys is more crucial given that boys have a role as family heads and bread winners. Drewry (2007)

observed that socio-economic status of the family and retention of the students in schools are inseparable. This was supported by Son (2012) who concluded that poverty and ignorance of parents leads to most children especially girls dropping out of school.

Occupational status of the parents is determined by the educational attainment and it determines the income levels hence the socio-economic status. Parental occupation has significant influence on students' retention in schools and academic achievements (Salfullahi, 2011). According to Ononuga (2005) parental occupation influences the type of education the children receive from their parents. Income and social status of the parents are mostly determined by the kind of occupation a parent engages in. Ogunshola and Adewale (2012) supported Ononuga (2005) and concluded that different occupations have different styles of child rearing, different ways of disciplining their children and different ways of reacting to challenges in the lives of their children.

Parents with better occupation are able to make adequate provision for their children's education. They are in a position to support their children's education. They are in a position to support their children economically. This makes it possible for the children to be retained in school, perform well and have high educational attainments. Mothers with better occupation are role models to their daughters as far as schooling is concerned.

Children who have parents with less prestigious occupation face many challenges both at home and in school which prevent them from participating fully in classroom activities and this may result to poor academic performance and/or dropping out of school. Mothers with prestigious occupation are more likely to identify their female children's problems to give a possible solution and also help them to do their homework by providing the

necessary facilities for learning development (Faisal, 2014). Poverty disarranges the living standards and schooling of girls. Members of the society should note that both boys and girls are the same and both need education. In case of low income in a family, the resources should be shared equally so that both sexes get equal education. Retention of girls in secondary schools should not be interfered with the name of promoting education for boys. It is also important to note that, retention of girls in secondary school improves the quality of education.

2.4. Influence of Parents' Educational level on Female Students' Retention in Public Secondary Schools

A study conducted by Orodho (2014), demonstrated that home educational background and parents' educational attainment greatly influence the education attainment of their children. Students' achievement was found directly proportional to the education level of their parents (Orodho, 2014). Researchers show that there is strong relationship between parents' education particularly mothers and children's school learning ability. Educated parents have the ability to identify with the school learning experiences of their children and therefore able to lend the necessary assistance to them.

Education Quality Dialogue report presented by the Ministry of Education in 2018 concluded that, students whose parents meet teachers regularly remain in school and perform better than those whose parents do not frequently meet teachers. Uneducated parents lack the ability and capacity to assist in the supervision of school assignment or proper guidance and counseling to their children (Colclough, Al-Saramal, Rose &

Tembo, 2003). Parental education, influence and encouragement are strongly related to improved female students' retention. Isangedighi (2011) observed that education gives parents discipline which is equally important in the learning of the children. Children who learn to accept parental authority at home will also accept the teachers' authority in the school. There is positive impact on students learning in school when parental interest and involvement in school activities are increased. Full involvement of parents in schooling is an important indicator of child success in schooling. This means students perform better in school if their parents are more involved with their schooling. There is also less dropout and improved retention when more parents participate in schooling since they are role models for the students. Parental education level is a very consistent determinant of children education and employment decisions thereafter. High parental education is associated with increased access to education, higher attendance rates and lower dropout rates (Jamie, 2011). Therefore, there is a powerful link between parental education and retention of students in school.

Research also shows that education of household members is an important factor in whether children gain access to schooling and for how long. Research carried out by Brown & Park (2010) indicates that majority parents and households who are not educated do not see the importance of providing support for their children schooling because they do not appreciate the benefits of schooling. The type of education acquired by the parents affects the students' academic performance in the schools. Parental education level helps in grooming the personality of the children and also adding skills and knowledge to their children. The academic achievement of the children and also

retention in schools is greatly influenced by parents' educational background. This is because the parents can be in a good position to be a second teacher at home to the child. Also such parents are able to give the necessary guidance and counseling to their children on the best way to perform well in education and provide the necessary materials needed by the children. Rothstein (2004) pointed from his research that children from a well-educated family with high socio-economic status are more likely to have higher educational achievements compared to children from an illiterate family. The reason is because children from educated family have a lot of support from the family members such as decent and good environment for academic work, parental support and decent feeling. Little support from parents and members of the family towards female students' education leads to lack of vision and prospects for future life which reduces girls' interest to participate achieve and perform in education. Parents and family members need to employ special efforts to cultivate female students' interest in education and provide a conducive environment that will ensure their full participation and achievement in education.

2.5 Influence of Family Size on Female Students' Retention in Public Secondary Schools

Andvig (2010) observed that in large families, older female children frequently drop out of school especially in rural areas. This was supported by Lloyd (2013) who concluded that each additional younger sibling significantly increases the probability that an elder female child would drop out of school as indicated by a research on fertility and schooling in Ghana. It is evident that children from large families may sometimes be absent from school because most of the time they are sent home to collect school fees and

other items. This is so because in most cases such families face financial constraints and may be incapable of meeting both basic needs at home and children's education.

Female children who come from large families are also affected by more by the incidents of HIV and AIDS pandemics. Such female students are compelled to take care of the sick siblings and parents and therefore forced to drop out of school. Son (2012) concluded that the individual attention for each child as far as parental involvement and interactions in the study life may be limited in a large family. There is usually an advantage of good attention and warmth for oldest child during early stages of live. Parental attention declines as the number of siblings increases and therefore later born are likely to drop out of school.

Parental interest and involvement in school have a positive impact on female students' retention. In families with small size, parents are more involved in their girls' education and therefore such girls are less likely to drop out of school. Generally, female students participate fully and perform better in school if their parents are more involved with their schooling. The more the parents participate in; decision making, as home teachers, as role models, boosters, fund raisers etc., the for the students and less drop outs.

Reinforcement of discipline in each child may also be a challenge and therefore such children may lose interest in education and perform poorly which might finally lead to drop out (Son, 2012). Also majority of the poor and large families have a preference of educating boys. This is due to the belief that boys continue the family, they are household heads and inherit property but girls are married and go away from home.

2.6 Influence of Parent's marital status on the Female Students' Retention in Public Secondary Schools

There are several significant changes that have occurred in African families since 1950 (Amato & Keith, 2001). There is a dramatic increase in divorce rate and this makes the children to be deprived parental love at the teenager age. Study carried out by Mcleod et al (2004) showed that children born to married parents have higher chances of remaining in school and doing better than the children born from single parent in Africa.

The presence of a father in a family is an important factor for the children's self-esteem. This has a strong influence on the retention of children in school (Passley, et al.,2006). Single parent home significantly affects; the behavior of the children, the achievements in the school and retention in school.

Single parenthood may lead to reduced quantity of parental time with their children who finally lead to less socialization, less supervision and monitoring and less involvement and emotional support. This uncontrolled behavior affects girls negatively and may lead to school dropout. Due to unfriendly learning environment at home, female students who are focused in education may end up dropping out of school. Such students need to be guided in order to build or add up to their aspiration. The parental guidance and counseling at home is very important for female students. It is also important to note that, the modern society has changed so much. The society safety nets that existed in traditional societies to ensure stable environment for the children to grow up are not there. According to Chapman (2008) when the home environment is not conducive and friendly for learning, students express their difficulties in schools through; withdrawal,

unhappiness, anger, annoyance etc. and this may lead to dropping out. Therefore, the female students need mentoring so as to complete the secondary education programme and translate for further education or work force. In most cases, single motherhood is associated with economic instability which leads to lack of basic needs among girls. Such girls may drop out of school to work for their basic needs. Also single motherhood may lead to stigmatization of the children which can lead to school dropout (Oyunga, 2011). Children from a single mother are under exposed to authority relations who are similar to those in school and in employment and this may make them not to cope with school rules and hence drop out of the school.

2.7 Summary and Research Gaps

The reviewed literature indicates that female students' retention in public secondary schools depends on several factors socio-economic factors and challenges experienced in different areas. From the above literature it is evident that there are several socio-economic factors that influence female students' retention in secondary school level of education. It is revealed that many African communities particularly those in the lower socio-economic class of people do not give equal opportunities for education among boys and girls. Mainly boys are given opportunity for better and higher education than girls. Socio-economic factors such as; financial status of the parents, educational level of the parents, family size and marital status of the parents affect retention of female students. In Mukaa Sub-County, retention of female students in public secondary schools have been ignored and therefore the main concern of this study was to investigate socio-economic factors that influence female students' retention in public secondary schools in

Mukaa Sub-County. Several studies have been conducted in this area but only in some parts of the Country. Studies have not looked at the influence of family financial status, parents' education level, family size and parents' marital status on female students retention in Mukaa Sub-County. Therefore, there is a gap to be filled by the current study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter the methodology structure of the study is represented. The chapter is divided into the following sections; Research Design, Location of the Study, Target Population, Sampling Techniques Sample size, Research Instruments, Pilot Study, Validity of Research Instruments, Reliability of Research Instrument, Data Collection Techniques, Data Analysis Techniques and Ethical Considerations.

3.2 Research Design

A research design is a conceptual structure in which research is conducted and constitutes the blue print for the collection, measurement and analysis of the data (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). This study adopted descriptive survey research design to investigate the current situation with regard to the influence of socio-economic factors on the retention of female students in public secondary school in Mukaa Sub- County. A descriptive survey research design is an attempt to collect data from members of the population in order to determine the correct situation of the population with respect to one or more variables (Munyoki & Mulwa, 2012). For social scientists and other educators, a descriptive survey research design is actually the best method for collecting original data for the purpose of describing a population which is too large to observe directly. This design also gives a great deal of accurate information and therefore it is appropriate for educational fact findings. With this design, the researcher gathered data from sampled

respondents in public secondary schools in Mukaa Sub- County and used it to describe the nature of existing conditions.

3.3 Location of the Study

The study was carried out in Mukaa sub-county, Makueni County, Kenya. Mukaa sub-county is 1° 51' 0" South and 37° 19' 0" East. The sub-county has 4 divisions namely; Kilome, Malili, Kasikeu and Kiou. There are 9 locations and 19 sub-locations in Mukaa sub-county. It lies in the arid and semi-arid zones of the eastern region and receives an average rainfall ranging from 400mm-600mm. The place experiences two rainy seasons, the long rains in March/April while the short rains occurring in November/ December. The temperatures range from 24.6°C to 34.0°C. Most of the land is used for agricultural purposes since most people depend on agriculture and livestock for their livelihood. The sub-county has potential in horticulture and dairy farming. Fruit growing is popular with main fruits being mangoes, pawpaw and oranges. The sub-county practices open air market days in which large amounts of farm produce are traded. Mukaa sub-county neighbours Nzau sub-county, Makueni Sub-county and Kilungu sub-county.

The economic activities in the area are greatly affected by rainfall unreliability and high temperatures. This has a negative effect on school fees payment hence retention of female students. The study was done in this area because the retention for female students in public secondary schools has been decreasing since 2011 to 2018 according to the Sub-County Director of Education as indicated in table 1.1 which shows enrolment and completion of female students in Mukaa Sub-County 2011-2018. Also, in this area the

influence of socio-economic factors on female students' retention has not been established.

3.4 Target Population

The target population is the population to which the researcher would like to generalize the results of the study. As mentioned earlier this study took place in Mukaa sub-county. Mukaa sub-county has 42 public secondary schools. There are 5 pure boys' schools, 7 pure girls' schools and 30 mixed secondary schools. This study targeted all principals, form 4 class teachers and form 4 female students of the 7 pure girls' schools and 30 mixed secondary schools. The target population was therefore 37 principals, 50 form four class teachers and 1,240 female students in form four 2019.

3.5 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

This study involved three groups of subjects, namely: principals, form four class teachers and form four female students. The sample frame consisted of 7 pure girls' public secondary schools and 30 mixed public secondary schools within Mukaa Sub-County. A suitable sample size is that which is a representative to the target population in major characteristics (Tromp & Kombo, 2006). A sample size of 10% to 30% of the target population is appropriate for analysis and reporting for descriptive studies (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003).

Stratified sampling technique was used to group the public secondary schools as County schools and Sub-County schools. The study used simple random sampling to select 3

County schools and 9 Sub-County schools. The researcher also used simple random sampling to select 12 principals, 15 class teachers and 124 female students in form 4. The sampling was done in Mukaa Sub-County which has 8 County schools and 29 Sub-County schools (Mukaa Sub-County Education Management Information Systems).

Table 3.1 Population and Sample Size

| Number of Schools | Sampling Technique | County schools | Sub-County Schools |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| 37 | Stratified Sampling | 8 | 29 |

| Category of schools | Total number | Sampling Technique | Sample size | % of the total |
|----------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| County schools | 8 | Simple Random | 3 | 30% |
| Sub-County schools | 29 | Simple Random | 9 | 30% |

| Subjects | Total Number | Sampling Technique | Sample Size | % of the total Population |
|---------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Principals | 37 | Simple Random | 12 | 30% |
| Form 4 class | 50 | Simple Random | 15 | 30% |
| Teachers | | | | |
| Female form 4 students | 1240 | Simple Random | 124 | 10% |

Source: Researcher (2019)

3.6 Research Instruments

The researcher used three sets of questionnaires and documentary analysis to collect data. The questionnaires consisted of open and closed ended questions to collect primary data. Questionnaire is the most suitable method of data collection when the respondents are willing to cooperate (Orodho, 2009). The questionnaires were administered to the principals, teachers and students. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), questionnaires are relatively cheaper, free from bias of the interviewer and the respondents have adequate time to give well thought out answers to the questions. The principal's questionnaire was divided in three sections. Section A collected data on Demographic information. Section B collected data on socio- economic factors and female students' retention. Section C collected data on female student retention. Class teachers' questionnaire was divided into three sections. Section A collected data on Demographic information. Section B collected data on socio-economic factors and

female students' retention. Section C collected data on retention of female students. Students' questionnaire was divided into three sections. Section A: collected Demographic information. Section B collected data to answer the research questions (related to research objectives of the study). The sub sections include; family financial status, family size, parent's educational level and parents' marital status. Section C collected data on female students' retention. The documentary analysis was used to reveal information on enrollment and completion of the students. The documents used were class registers for; form 1 2016, form 2 2017, form 3 2018 and form 4 2019 and the students' admission book. The secondary data revealed the number of female students who dropped out per year since 2016.

3.7 Pilot Study

The researcher selected two public secondary schools (pure girls' secondary school and mixed secondary school) in Nzau Sub-county to pilot the study instruments. The purpose of pilot study was to test the appropriateness of the items to the respondents in order to improve the instruments so as to enhance their reliability. The pilot study helped to identify items in the research instruments which were ambiguous and therefore helped the researcher to modify or rephrase the questions. Through pilot study, the weakness, inconsistency and ambiguity noted in the questionnaires were corrected to make them reliable.

3.8 Validity of Research Instruments

Validity is concerned with establishing whether the research instrument is measuring what it is supposed to measure (Orodho, 2009). To enhance validity, the research instruments were appraised by the supervisors and their feedback was included in the questionnaires. The research instruments were also discussed with the experts in social science education to ascertain the content in the questionnaire. The researcher then made structural changes to improve the research instruments.

3.9 Reliability of Research Instruments

Reliability is a measure of the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results or data after repeated trial (Mugenda & Mugenda 2008). The pilot study was necessary to enable the researcher to test the reliability of the research instruments. Most researchers recommend test and re-test method to measure reliability of an instrument. Therefore, the questionnaire was administered to the appropriate group selected randomly. The same questionnaire was administered to the same group after two weeks. The scores of each of the two tests were computed and the two scores correlated using Pearson's Product Moment correlation coefficient formula to determine the correlation coefficient (r) between the two sets of scores.

The correlation coefficient obtained was 0.781 for students' questionnaire, 0.763 for teachers' questionnaire and 0.755 for principals' questionnaire. This means the research instruments could be relied upon for this study. A correlation coefficient of about 0.75 and above then, is considered high enough to judge an instrument as reliable (Orodho, 2009).

3.10 Data Collection Procedure

Before data collection, the researcher obtained clearance from Machakos University. The researcher used the letter of approval from the Department of Educational Management and Curriculum Studies and the Dean Graduate School to get a permit from the National Commission of Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). The researcher then sought permission from the sub-county director of education Mukaa Sub-County. Then the researcher made appointment with the school principals of the selected schools. The researcher personally administered the research instruments to the subjects. The form four class teachers accompanied the researcher in their classes, introduced her to the students and allowed her to administer the questionnaires. The questionnaires were collected immediately they were filled.

3.11 Data Analysis

After collection, the raw data was refined to facilitate final analysis. Data analysis is the process of organizing the collected data and putting it together so that the researcher can meaningfully, categorize and synthesize information from the data collecting tools (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). The quantitative data collected was coded for analysis and entered using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24 computer software. Descriptive statistics were used for analysis. The results were presented using frequency tables, bar graphs and percentages to make meaningful conclusions.

3.12 Ethical Considerations

Ethical aspects of the study were effectively addressed in the following manner. Any information obtained from another author was referenced using the American Psychological Association (APA) format. The identity of the research participants was not captured; the names of the respondents were not included. Informed permission of the respondents was sought before including them in the study. No one was forced or coerced to provide information. Respondents were informed of the objectives of the study before data collection process. During generalization of the results, the researcher reported the research findings as they were accurately or as she was told. The researcher respected and safeguarded the rights of freewill, privacy, confidentiality and well-being of the research participants. The respondents were treated with due respect and courtesy and protected from any physical and psychological harm. The questionnaire was administered through voluntary informed consent and the participants were assured no harm would result from any information given in filling the questionnaires. Finally, the researcher ensured that her own personal biases and opinions did not get in the way of her research.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents data analysis, presentation, interpretation and discussion of findings. The chapter was organized based on the study research objectives; to establish the influence of family financial status on female students' retention, to determine the influence of parent's education level female students' retention, to establish the influence of family size on female students' retention as well as to establish the influence of parents' marital status on the female students' retention in public secondary school in Mukaa Sub-county. The responses were analyzed into frequencies and percentages and presented in tables and figures.

4.2 Response Rate

Questionnaires return rate is the part or percentage of questionnaires that were satisfactorily filled and given back to the researcher. The respondents involved were the principals, class teachers and female students. The response rate is presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Questionnaires Return Rate

| Respondents | Questionnaire Submitted | Questionnaire Collected | Return rate (%) |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| Principals | 12 | 12 | 100 |
| Class Teachers | 15 | 10 | 66.7 |
| Female Students | 124 | 124 | 100.0 |
| Total | 151 | 146 | - |

Table 4.1 indicates that the average questionnaire return rate was well above 70 percent which according to Mugenda and Mugenda (2008) is adequate for analysis.

4.3 Background Information of Respondents

The study focused on the background information of the principals and teachers. The background information of principals concentrated on gender, education level and period of serving as a principal in the current school. Table 4.2 presents the principals' demographic information.

Table 4.2: Background Information of Principals

| Variable | Frequency (F) | Percentage (%) |
|--|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Gender | | |
| Male | 5 | 41.7 |
| Female | 7 | 58.3 |
| Total | 12 | 100.0 |
| Education level | | |
| Masters' degree | 4 | 33.3 |
| Bachelors' degree | 8 | 66.7 |
| Total | 12 | 100.0 |
| Period of serving in current school | | |
| Less than 3 years | 4 | 33.3 |
| 4-6 years | 6 | 50.0 |
| 7-9 years | 1 | 8.3 |
| 10-12 years | 1 | 8.3 |
| Total | 12 | 100.0 |
| N-12 | | |

Table 4.2 shows that 58.3% of the principals were female and 41.7% were male. The main reason for this is that only pure girl's schools and mixed schools were selected for study. Pure girls' schools are headed by female principals while in mixed schools the principal can be of any gender. Findings also show that 66.7% of the principals had attained bachelor's degree while 33.3% had attained masters' degree. This shows that being at secondary level of education; the principals are putting more efforts to move to higher levels of education and acquire more school administration skills and are also in a position to advice students on importance of education and encouraging them to remain in school till completion of the secondary school. The results also show that 66.7% of principals had served for 4-12 years while 33.3% had served for less than 3 years. This shows that the principals had a vast experience in school leadership thus in a good position to curb drop out of girls' in their school and this can contribute to high retention.

The background information of teachers concentrated on gender and education level. Table 4.3 presents the teachers' demographic information.

Table 4.3: Background Information of Teachers

| Variable | Frequency (F) | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Gender | | |
| Male | 6 | 60.0 |
| Female | 4 | 40.0 |
| Total | 10 | 100.0 |
| Education level | | |
| Bachelors' degree | 10 | 100.0 |
| Total | 10 | 100.0 |
| N-10 | | |

Table 4.3 shows that 60% of the teachers were male while 40% were female. This implies that there was gender disparity in the teaching fraternity in the study area. This might contribute to lack of role models especially for girls leading to drop outs. With regards to education level, all teachers 100% had attained bachelors' degree. This shows that the teachers were well educated to understand the concept of the study and also encourage girls to remain in school till completion.

In order to establish the nature and classification of secondary school that admit girls in Mukaa sub-county, the principals, teachers and students were asked to indicate the nature and category of their schools. Findings are presented in Table 4.4

Table 4.4: School classification

| Variable | Frequency (F) | Percentage (%) |
|---------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Nature of school | | |
| Mixed school | 9 | 75 |
| Girls only school | 3 | 25 |
| Total | 12 | 100.0 |
| Category of school | | |
| County | 3 | 25 |
| Sub-county | 9 | 75 |
| Total | 12 | 100.0 |
| N-12 | | |

Table 4.4 show that majority of the public secondary schools 75% were mixed schools while 25% were girls' only schools. This shows that single gender schools were very few in the study area which might contribute to drop out of female students as some might feel uncomfortable sharing classes and other facilities with boys. In addition, a high

number of the secondary schools 75% were Sub-County schools while 25% were County schools. This shows that the government has not put up measures to fully support girls' education in the study area since there is only one girls County school in the sub-county. This could contribute to low retention rates of girls in the available and accessible mixed Sub- County schools in the area.

In order to establish the retention rates per year of female students in public secondary schools in Mukaa sub-county, the researcher analyzed class registers and admission book which revealed the number of female students admitted in form 1 2016 as well as the number of students who dropped out in; 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019. Table 4.5 presents enrolment and dropout rates between 2016 – 2019

Table 4.5: Girls Retention Rates

| Year | Class | Enrollment of female students | No. of students who dropped out | Dropout rate |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------------------------|--|---------------------|
| 2016 | Form 1 | 461 | 53 | 11.5% |
| 2017 | Form 2 | 415 | 25 | 6.0% |
| 2018 | Form 3 | 381 | 15 | 4.0% |
| 2019 | Form 4 | 358 | 8 | 2.2% |
| Total | | 1615 | 101 | - |

Table 4.5 show that not all female students that were admitted in the secondary school completed the secondary education. Some dropped out of school although the dropout rates have been decreasing over the years. 2016 had the highest dropout rate at 11.5% while 2019 although we are still in the middle of the year has the lowest dropout rate at 2.2%. The results from the document analysis was also supported by the principals who

indicated that not every girl that was admitted has reached up to form four, the class teachers who indicated that some of the students have dropped out since the beginning of the fourth year and the students who indicated that some of their colleagues have dropped out of school. All the respondents indicated that the number of girls who drop out every year range from one to five girls in every class.

4.4 Influence of Family Financial Status on Female Students' Retention

The first research objective was to establish the influence of family financial status on female students' retention in public secondary schools in Mukaa Sub-county. The researcher sought to find out the financial status of the families that the students came from. Table 4.6 presents the family financial status.

Table 4.6: Family Financial Status

| Variable | Frequency (F) | Percentage (%) |
|--|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Type of family | | |
| Poor | 108 | 87.1 |
| Middle | 16 | 12.9 |
| Total | 124 | 100.0 |
| Total amount of money earned annually | | |
| Less than 50,000 | 63 | 50.8 |
| 50,000-100,000 | 48 | 38.7 |
| 100,000-150,000 | 10 | 8.1 |
| 150,000-200,000 | 3 | 2.4 |
| Total | 124 | 100.0 |
| School fees financier | | |
| Parents | 113 | 91.1 |
| Guardians | 8 | 6.5 |
| Well-wisher | 3 | 2.4 |
| Total | 124 | 100.0 |

Findings in Table 4.6 show that majority of the students 87.1% described their families as poor. This was supported by 50.8% of the students who indicated that their family annual income was less than 50,000 and those 38.7% indicated that their family annual income was between 50,000-100,000. Only a few students who indicated that their family annual income was more than 100,000. Findings further show that majority of the students' education 91.1% was financed by their parents although there were 6.5% who were funded by guardians and 2.4% that were funded by well-wishers. The finding shows that majority of the female students in the study area come from poor families who lack the

ability to fully finance their children education. The finding concurs with Son (2012) who revealed that poverty of parents leads to most children especially girls dropping out of school.

In order to understand how family financial status influence students' retention, students were asked to tick with a yes or no answer on questions with regards to fees payment. Table 4.7 presents the findings.

Table 4.7: Students Responses on Influence of Lack of School Fees

| Questions | Yes | | No | |
|---|------------|----------|-----------|----------|
| | F | % | F | % |
| Have you ever been sent home for fees? | 109 | 87.9 | 15 | 12.1 |
| Did you come back immediately? | 59 | 54.1 | 50 | 45.9 |
| Are there some students in your class who drop out of school due to lack of school fees? | 91 | 73.4 | 33 | 26.6 |

N=124

Findings in Table 4.7 show that majority of the students 87.9% have at one time been sent home for school fees. The study revealed that 54.1% of the female students who were at one time sent home for school fees came back immediately while 45.9% could not come immediately. This shows almost half of parents and guardians could solve fees problem immediately. The findings of the study also showed that 73.4% responded in affirmative that there were some students in their class who dropped out of school due to lack of school fees. This finding was further supported by the students who indicated that the funds to finance their academic needs were inadequate as shown in Table 4.8. This

implies that some parents are not able to fully finance their children academic needs and they are at times sent home to collect school fees and not all students who are sent home manage to come back to school due to financial limitations. This reduces retention rates in public secondary schools. The finding is in agreement with Owuoth (2010) and Oyunga (2011) who both agreed that most girls drop out of school due to lack of adequate finances to cater for the education and social needs. The education needs include learning materials, school uniform and school fees while social needs include personal hygiene needs.

Table 4.8: Adequacy of Finances

| Extent | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Adequate | 25 | 20.2 |
| Inadequate | 83 | 66.9 |
| Very inadequate | 16 | 12.9 |
| Total | 124 | 100.0 |

Table 4.8 show that 66.9% of the students indicated that the finances were inadequate, 12.9% indicated that finances were very inadequate and 20.2% of the students indicated that the finances were adequate to meet all academic needs. This finding support the previous finding that majority of the students come from poor families who are unable to pay school fees on time as well as meet all financial needs of a students' leading to drop out in extreme cases where parents are unable to raise the funds and girls look for menial jobs to meet their needs. The financial engagement for girls who drop out school in Mukaa Sub-county are mainly working as domestic house helps and working as casual laborers in shops or hotels. The finding concurs with Juma (2010) who also found out

that inadequate funds in the family force girls to drop from school and start looking for financial engagements in towns.

The principals and teachers were asked to indicate the extent to which family financial status influence retention of female students. Findings are presented in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9: Teachers and Principals Responses on Influence of Financial Status

| Extent | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| To some extent | 6 | 27.3 |
| To great extent | 16 | 72.7 |
| Total | 22 | 100.0 |

Findings in Table 4.9 show that 72.7% of the teachers and principals indicated that family financial status influence female students' retention to a great extent and 27.3% indicated to some extent. All the teachers and principals who participated in the study added that the main financiers of the students are the parents who are low income earners and are unable to pay fees on time leading to the students being sent out of school and some don't come back to school hence affecting retention rates. The finding concurs with Chacha (2012) which established that family income affects girls' retention throughout level of learning. Girls from low income families are often sent out of school and eventually drop out of school. A few principals and class teachers indicated that some female students report to school late after opening due to fees problems. Majority of class teachers, especially in day schools indicated that some female students report without any school fees in the opening day and when sent home for do not come immediately.

The students were also asked to indicate the extent to which the financial status of their family affected their education. Table 4.10 presents the findings.

Table 4.10: Students Responses on Influence of Financial Status

| Extent | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Little | 20 | 16.1 |
| Great | 71 | 57.3 |
| Very great | 33 | 26.6 |
| Total | 124 | 100.0 |

Findings in Table 4.10 show that 57.3% of the students felt that their family financial status affected their education to a great extent, 26.6% indicated to a very great extent and 16.1% of the students indicated to a little extent. The findings show that family financial status highly influence girls' education. The girls might opt to drop out of school to avoid shame especially if the family is unable to meet all financial needs required to maintain girls in school. The finding is in agreement with Drewry (2007) that the financial status of the family affects children retention in schools.

4.5 Influence of Parents' Education Level on Female Students' Retention

The second research objective was to establish the influence of parents' education level on female students' retention in public secondary schools in Mukaa Sub-county. The students were therefore asked to indicate their parents' education level. Findings are presented in Figure 4.1.

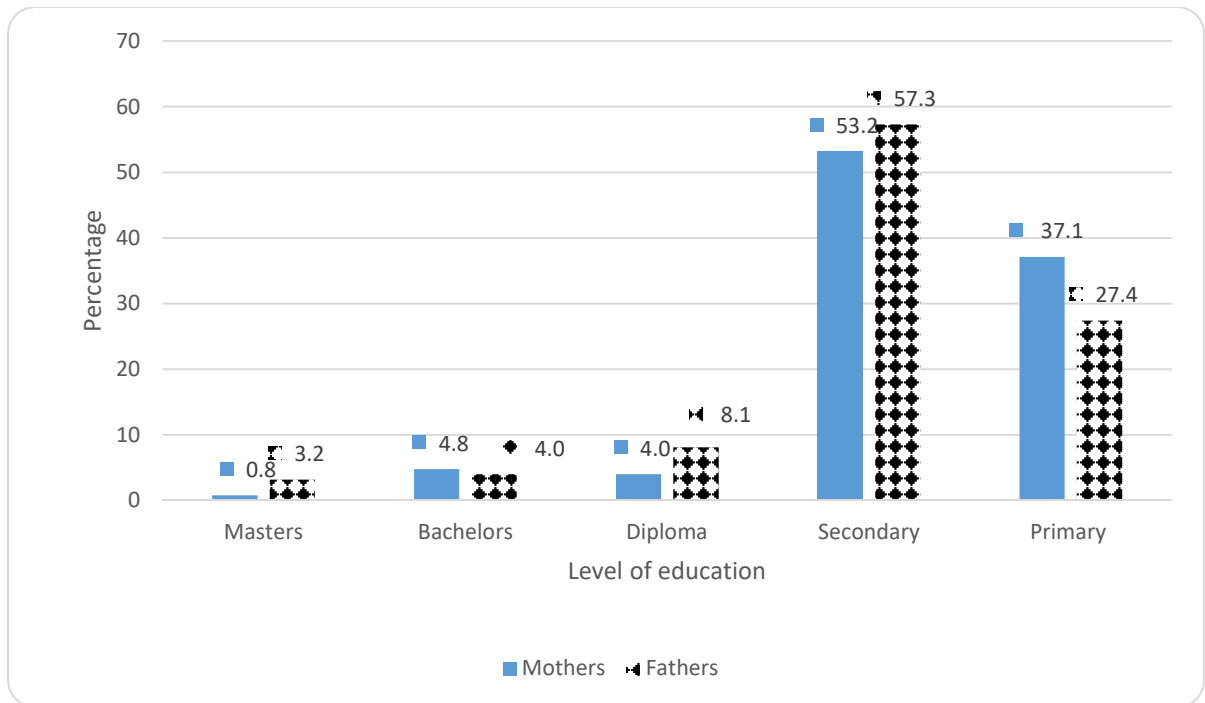


Figure 4.1: Parents’ Level of Education

Findings show that 53.2% (66) of the mothers and 57.3% (71) of the fathers had attained secondary education while 37.1% (46) of the mothers and 27.4% (34) of the fathers had only attained primary education. Only a small percentage of the parents had attained diploma, bachelors and masters. This shows that majority of the parents had only attained basic primary and secondary education and only a few had attained higher education to enable them build a career. Findings also implies that male parents are more educated compared to female parents which proves the boy child education is more prioritized and boys are supported to pursue higher education. In addition uneducated parents do not see importance of girl child education. The finding supports Brown and Park (2010) findings that majority of parents and households who are not educated do not see the importance of providing support for their children schooling because they do not

appreciate the benefits of schooling. People who have attained higher education have better chances of securing professional jobs.

The study therefore sought at finding out the occupation of students' parents. Findings were summarized and presented in Table 4.11.

Table 4.11: Parents Occupation

| Occupation | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Farming | 96 | 51.1 |
| Business | 47 | 25.0 |
| Teaching | 16 | 8.5 |
| Manual jobs | 10 | 5.3 |
| Nurse | 6 | 3.2 |
| Accountant | 5 | 2.6 |
| Beautician | 3 | 1.6 |
| Engineer | 3 | 1.6 |
| Doctor | 2 | 1.1 |
| Total | 188 | 100 |

N=188

The finding in Table 4.11 supports the previous finding on parental level of education that majority of the parents are not professions. Findings of the study show that 51.1% of the students indicated that their parents were peasant farmers while 25.0% indicated that their parents were involved in businesses. Only a few parents were involved in recognized professions. Professional parents are in a better position to encourage their children to choose a good career path as compared to unprofessional parents. Career parents also encourage their parents to focus on their studies till completion. The finding concurs with Salfullahi (2011) that parental occupation has significance influence on

students' retention in schools and academic achievements. The finding also agrees with Faisal (2014) study that children who have parents with less prestigious occupation face many challenges both at home and in school which prevent them from participating fully in classroom activities and this may result to poor academic performance and/or dropping out of school.

The study also sought the teachers and principals' opinion on the extent to which parents' level of education influence students' education. Findings are presented in Table 4.12.

Table 4.12: Teachers and Principals Responses on Influence of Parents' Education Level

| Extent | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| To some extent | 10 | 45.5 |
| To great extent | 12 | 54.5 |
| Total | 22 | 100.0 |

The findings in Table 4.12 show that 54.5% of the teachers and principals indicated that parents' education level influence female students' retention to a great extent and 45.5% indicated to some extent. The principals and teachers further explained that educated parents know the value of education and they encourage their daughters to scale higher in education. In addition, students from educated family tend to have high academic achievements and bright career prospects. On the other hand, illiterate parents are not supportive of girl child education rather they invest in educating the boys. The finding concurs with Rothstein (2004) that children whose parents have attained higher education have higher chances of attaining higher education too as compared to children

whose parents have only attained little or no formal education at all. Majority of the principals and class teachers indicated that most of the educated parents do not miss academic days for their daughters and regularly visit the schools to monitor the academic progress of their daughters. A few class teachers indicated that most parents who actively participate in class motivation programmes have attained higher education.

The students were also asked to indicate the extent to which their parents' education level affected their education. Table 4.13 presents the findings.

Table 4.13: Students Responses on Influence of parents' education level

| Extent | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Very little | 6 | 4.8 |
| Little | 21 | 17.0 |
| Great | 30 | 24.2 |
| Very great | 67 | 54.0 |
| Total | 124 | 100.0 |

Findings in Table 4.13 show that 54.0% of the students felt that their parents' education level affected their education to a very great extent, 24. 2% indicated to a great extent, 17.0% indicated to a little extent and 4.8% of the students felt that their parents' education level affected their education to a very little extent. The students concurs with the teachers and principals that parents' level of education influence students' education. This implies that academic success of a student's depends highly on the parents education level since students raised by professionals will also aspire to be professionals. The finding concurs with Jamie (2011) study which revealed that students whose parents have attained high education are more likely to access higher education and low chances of

dropping out of school. Colclough, Al-Saramal, Rose and Tembo, (2003) also agreed that uneducated parents do not have the capacity to help in the supervision of school assignment or proper guidance and counseling to their children.

The findings also agree with Orodho (2014) study which demonstrated that home educational background and parents educational attainment greatly influence the educational attainment of their children. The findings are also in agreement with Rothstein (2004) study which pointed out that children from a well-educated family with high socio- economic status are more likely to remain in school in school and have higher educational achievement compared to children from illiterate family. Parents are role models to their children in almost all aspects of life and therefore educated parents inspire their female students to remain in school and achieve high academic level irrespective of the challenges in the school. Educated mothers inspire their daughters to continue schooling and acquire high academic attainments. Educated parents are also fully involved in their female students' academic life; they attend academic days in schools, visit school to monitor their daughters' progress as compared to the illiterate parents.

4.6 Influence of Family Size on Female Students' Retention

The third research objective was to determine the influence of family size on female students' retention in public secondary schools in Mukaa Sub-county. In order to establish students' family size, the students were asked to indicate the number of siblings in their family, number of elder siblings that never went to school, siblings that have

dropped those that have completed and the number of siblings in primary school. Findings on family size are presented in Table 4.14.

Key: No. a (siblings in a family), No. b (elder siblings who never went to secondary), No. c (siblings who dropped out of secondary), No. d (siblings who have completed secondary school), No. e (in primary school)

Table 4.14: Students Family Size

| Number of family members | No. a | | No. b | | No. c | | No. d | | No. e | |
|--------------------------|-------|------|-------|------|-------|------|-------|------|-------|------|
| | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | F | % |
| None | | | 103 | 83.1 | 96 | 77.4 | 38 | 30.6 | 26 | 21.0 |
| 1-5 | 44 | 35.5 | 2 | 1.6 | 12 | 9.7 | 40 | 32.3 | 42 | 33.9 |
| 6-10 | 76 | 61.3 | 18 | 14.5 | 14 | 11.3 | 43 | 34.7 | 53 | 42.7 |
| More than 10 | 4 | 3.2 | 1 | 0.8 | 2 | 1.6 | 3 | 2.4 | 3 | 2.4 |
| N=124 | | | | | | | | | | |

Findings in Table 4.14 show that 61.3% of the students had 6-10 family members, 83.1% indicated that all their siblings went to secondary schools while 16.9% of the students had siblings who never went to secondary school with 14.5% of students from families with 6-10 members. 77.4% of the students indicated that no siblings dropped out of secondary school while 22.6% had siblings who dropped out of secondary with 11.3% from families with 6-10 members. 30.6% of the interviewed students had siblings who completed form four while 69.4% of the students had between 1-10 siblings who have completed secondary school. 21.0% of the students had no siblings in primary school while 79.0% of the students had siblings in primary school with 42.7% from families with 6-10 members. This shows that majority of the students came from a big family and in some

instances not all siblings managed to complete secondary school. Children from a big family also gets little parental attention and some might feel discriminated in the family and lose interest in schooling leading to drop outs. The finding is in agreement with Son (2012) who established that in families with a high number of children, parents are not able to attend to education need of every child like supervising their homework and tracking their performance and such students are likely to drop out of school.

The students were also asked whether the size of their family affect their studies. Findings are presented in Table 4.15.

Table 4.15: Responses on whether Family Size Influence Studies

| Extent | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Yes | 31 | 25.0 |
| No | 93 | 75.0 |
| Total | 124 | 100.0 |

Findings in Table 4.15 show that 75% of the students felt that the size of their family did not affect their studies and 25% felt that their family size affected their studies. This shows that studies of students who come from a big family of more than five children are sometimes affected especially when parents are not economically stable to support all of them and older ones might be forced to drop out to lessen the load of academic support. The finding concurs with Andvig(2010) who established that in a big family, elder children frequently drop out of school especially in rural areas to allow their young ones to access basic education. The elder students who drop out of school look for jobs to substitute family income.

The study also sought teachers and principals opinion on influence of family size. This is because they are also parents and they better understand the effects of raising up many children. Findings are presented in Table 4.16

Table 4.16: Teachers and Principals Responses on Influence of Family Size

| Extent | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| To some extent | 7 | 31.8 |
| To great extent | 15 | 68.2 |
| Total | 22 | 100.0 |

The findings in Table 4.16 show that 68.2% of the teachers and principals indicated that family size influence students' studies to a great extent and 31.8% indicated to some extent. All the teachers and principals explained that many female students come from big families with many schooling siblings hence parents are unable to support every child education needs. In addition, big families prioritize educating boys while older girls are encouraged to either get married or work as house helps to supplement the family financial needs. This finding differs with the students which could be due to the fact that teachers and principals are also parents and they understand better the challenges of raising up many children. Furthermore, students especially those in boarding schools might not fully understand challenges faced by their parents since parents always try to cover up their problems. The finding is in agreement with Lloyd (2013) study which revealed that additional younger sibling significantly increases the probability that an elder female child would drop out of school as indicated by a research on fertility and schooling. The findings of the study concurs with Andvig (2010) study which observed that in large families, older female children frequently drop out of school especially in

rural areas. The findings of the study is also in agreement with Son (2012) study which concluded that the individual attention for each child as far as parental involvement and interactions in the study life is concerned, may be limited in large families. In large families, it is not easy for the parents to pay individual attention to each child's education life and this may result to some children dropping out of school.

4.7 Influence of Parents' Marital Status on Female Students' Retention

The fourth research objective was to establish the influence of parents' marital status on the female students' retention in public secondary school in Mukaa Sub-county. Students were asked to indicate the marital status of their parents. Findings are presented in Figure 4.2.

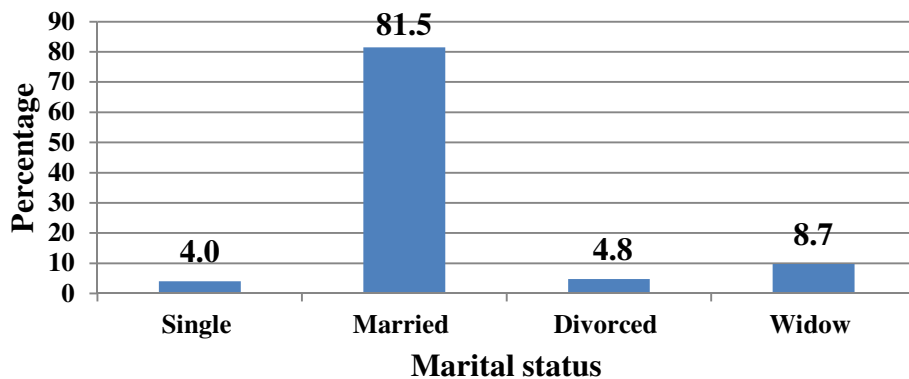


Figure 4.2: Parents' Marital Status

Findings in Figure 4.2 show that majority of the parents 81.5% (101) were married, 8.7% (12) were widowed, 4.8% (6) were divorced while 4% (5) of the students had single parents. This shows majority of the students were raised by both parents and their chances of remaining in school could be higher since they have both maternal and paternal support. The finding concurs with Mcleod, et al, (2004) that children born to

married parents have higher chances of remaining in school and doing better than the children born from single parent. This because the students are supported by both parents and given more attention hence are able to focus on the academic achievement.

The study also sought at finding out whether the parents lived with a single parent or both parents. Findings are presented in Table 4.17.

Table 4.17: Students Parenting

| Parent | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Father | 6 | 4.8 |
| Mother | 22 | 17.8 |
| Both | 96 | 77.4 |
| Total | 124 | 100.0 |

Findings in Table 4.17 show that majority of the students 77.4% lived with both parents, 17.8% lived with the mother only while 4.8% lived with their father only. This implies that the students were raised up differently while some experienced both parents upbringing; others were only raised by a single parent. The presence of both parents in a student life is an important factor in children academic and social life. The finding is in agreement with Passley, et al., (2006) who found out that a father in a family is a significant factor for the children’s self-esteem and it has a strong influence on the retention of children in school.

The findings prompted the researcher to find out whether the students were supported by their parent(s). Findings are presented in Table 4.18.

Table 4.18: Students Responses on Parental Support

| Extent | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Yes | 110 | 88.7 |
| No | 14 | 11.3 |
| Total | 124 | 100.0 |

Findings in Table 4.18 show that majority of the students 88.7% felt that their parents fully supported them and 11.3% felt that their parents did not support them. This shows that the parents were trying their best to support their children in academics which might lead to higher retention rates. The finding also concurs with Passley, et al., (2006) that parental support has a strong influence on the retention of children in school. The findings of the study also agrees with Mcleod, et al. (2004) study which showed that children born to married parents have higher chances of remaining in school and doing better than those born from single parent in Africa.

The researcher further sought teachers and principals' opinion on influence of parental marital status on female students' retention. This is because they are mature adults who know more about marriage life and effects of separation and divorce on their children. Findings are presented in Table 4.19.

Table 4.19: Teachers and Principals Responses on Influence of Parents' Marital Status

| Extent | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| To some extent | 9 | 41.0 |
| To great extent | 13 | 59.0 |
| Total | 22 | 100.0 |

The finding in Table 4.19 show that 59.0% of the teachers and principals indicated that parents' marital status influence female students' retention to a great extent and 41.0% indicated to some extent. All the teachers and principals explained that most of the students who are raised by single mothers are often involved in indiscipline cases and end up being expelled from school while students raised by both parents are rarely involved in indiscipline cases and they remain in school until completion. The finding concurs with Oyunga (2011) study which revealed that in most cases, single motherhood is associated with economic instability which leads to lack of basic needs among girls and such girls may drop out of school to work in order to meet their basic needs. Additionally, single parent home significantly affects the behavior of the children, the achievements in the school and retention in school. The findings of the study also agrees with Chapman (2008) study which concluded that when home environment is not conducive and friendly for learning, students express their difficulties in schools through; withdrawal, unhappiness, anger, annoyance etc. and this may lead to school dropout. Female students from single mothers lack parental care since the parent is always busy to cater for family financial needs and this affects their studies.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the summary of the major findings and conclusions. It also suggests recommendations for potential actions and suggestions for future research.

5.2 Summary of the Study

The purpose of this was to investigate the extent to which socio-economic factors influence female students' retention in public secondary schools in Mukaa sub-county, Makueni County, Kenya. The study was guided by the following research objectives; to establish the influence of family financial status on female students' retention in public secondary schools in Mukaa Sub-county; to determine the influence of parent's education level on female students' retention in public secondary schools in Mukaa Sub-county; to establish the influence of family size on female students' retention in public secondary schools in Mukaa Sub-county and to establish the influence of parents' marital status on the female students' retention in public secondary school in Mukaa Sub-county.

In line with the first objective, findings established that family financial status influence female students' retention to a great extent as indicated by 72.7% of the teachers and principals. Majority of the parents in the samples public secondary schools were low income earners with an annual income of less than 50,000. Parents were therefore unable to pay fees on time and school could no longer keep their children in school. The students are sometimes sent home for fees and not all of them came back to school but the

financial status of their parents made them to drop out. The available finances provided by parents were inadequate leading to drop out as students left school to look for menial jobs to be able to meet their needs.

In line with the second objective, findings reveal that parent education level influence female students' retention to a great extent as indicated by 54.5% of the teachers and principals. Majority of the parents had only attained basic primary and secondary education and only a few had attained higher education to enable them work as professionals. Male parents were more educated compared to female parents which prove that boy child education is more prioritized whereby boys are given chances to pursue higher education. Only a few parents were professional and majority of them were involved in farming, small businesses and menial jobs. Children from well-educated parents have better chances of pursuing their siblings or parents' professionals but those brought up by illiterate parents lack immediate role models to mirror and might give up on education and drop out of school.

The third research objective was on influence of family size on female students' retention. Findings established that family size influence female students' retention to a great extent as indicated by 68.2% of the teachers and principals. Some students came from big families with as many as five siblings. Their parents were therefore overwhelmed by education and social needs of every child. Parents in a big family are also unable to balance attention given to every child and elder children feel neglected and some even drop out of school. In addition, families with many siblings prioritize

educating boys while girls are encouraged to either get married or work as house helps to supplement the family financial needs.

In line with the fourth research objective, the study established that, parents' marital status influence female students' retention to a great extent as indicated by 59.0% of the teachers and principals. Majority of the parents were married hence the students were raised by both parents and their chances of remaining in school could be higher since they have both maternal and paternal support. However, there were a few students who were raised by single parents either because their mothers were not married, death of one parent, separation or divorce. Single parenting significantly affects the behavior of the children, their achievements in the school and retention in school.

5.3 Conclusion

Findings have proved that most female students drop out of school because of their parents' poor financial status. The parents who are low income earners are not able to pay school fees on time. This leads to the school administration sending the students home to collect school fees and not all students who are sent home manage to come back to school. When the parents lack funds to maintain their children in school, they end up dropping out. Female have more needs as compared to boys and lack of money for academic and personal needs force them to drop out of school to look for manual jobs while other get married.

It can also be concluded from the study that; parental level of education influences female students' retention rates in public secondary school. It has also shown that high academic attainment of parents significantly reduces chances of female students' dropout. The researcher further concludes educated parents were more effective in helping their children in academic work and that educated parents were interested in the academic progress of their children and encourage them to pursue professional careers.

From the findings, it is evident that most female students come from big families of between two to five siblings who are also in school. Their parents have a big responsibility of caring for all of them whereby the elder ones especially those in secondary schools may drop out to give others a chance to acquire basic primary education which is more affordable as compared to secondary education. Principals and class teachers indicated that it was difficulty for parents with large families to provide for the educational requirements of their daughters especially with the rising cost of living.

It is also concluded that female students brought up by both parents have high chances of completing secondary education than female students raised by single parents. The female students raised by single parents are often involved in truancy leading to suspension and expulsion in extreme cases. The parents sometimes give up on the students and they end up becoming secondary school drop outs.

5.4 Recommendations

The listed recommendations were made in order to increase female students' retention in public secondary school in Mukaa Sub-county.

i. The Ministry of Education should review bursary policies especially so that they benefit the needy students. This will ensure retention of female students who come from low socio-economic background.

ii. The study recommends that the government and other stakeholders in education sector should increase the funding for secondary education to cater for all the school monetary needs in order to cushion students from poor economic background from dropping out of school.

iii. Communities should be empowered to start off income generating activities to alleviate poverty and enable families increase their income and have the ability to retain their female students in secondary school till completion. Still on the same, the school management board, parents' association, teachers and also students need to initiate income generating and learning programmes like poultry keeping in the school to help needy students in terms of provision of basic needs.

iv. The government through the Ministry of Education and other Ministries, Non-Governmental Organizations, churches and other stakeholders should conduct awareness and sensitization campaign on importance of family planning in Mukaa Sub- County. The public should be informed that the cost of living in general and the cost of education in particular have increased tremendously and therefore there is need to have few children

which they can comfortably raise and provide for all education needs with limited resources available.

v. The Government should sensitize parents especially in rural areas to fully understand and appreciate the importance of completion of secondary education.

vi. Findings established that students from single parents have high chances of dropping out of school; single parents and also broken families should therefore seek help from church ministers and counselors to help mold their children so they do not give in life and drop out of school.

vii. Parents and guardians should try their level best to provide basic needs for the female students so that they can be comfortable in school. This helps them to compete with boys effectively in academics and also encourages them to complete the education programme.

viii. School administrators should encourage and strengthened guidance and counseling department in schools. The department will assist those female students who come from; low socio-economic background, broken families, large families, single parent families and illiterate parents. Through the efforts of administrators and guidance and counseling department such female students can be helped to fully participate in secondary education and complete the programme.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Study

The researcher suggests listed areas for further study.

- i. A related study focusing on another sub-county could be carried out to determine if the circumstances in Mukaa sub-County apply to other Sub-counties in Kenya.
- ii. A study on the role of school administration on female students' retention in public secondary schools in Mukaa Sub- County should be conducted.
- iii. A similar study should be undertaken in public primary schools in the sub-County in order to compare results.
- iv. This study could be conducted in order to include a larger population using the same instruments and also include more respondents such as Sub- County Education Officers, parents, Board of Management (BOM) members, Parents and Teachers Association (PTA) members and other stakeholders who have more information on the socio-economic factors influencing female students' retention.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

Jacinta W. Nzina

Machakos University

P.O BOX 136-90100

Machakos. Kenya.

Dear sir /Madam,

RE: REQUEST TO FILL QUESTIONNAIRE FOR RESEARCH PURPOSE

I am a post – graduate student pursuing a master’s degree in Educational planning at Machakos University. I am carrying out a research on *socio-economic factors influencing female students Retention in public secondary schools in Mukaa sub –county*. Your school has been selected/sampled for the study and you have been selected as a respondent.

Kindly spare time and complete this questionnaire. The information obtained will be purely for this study and will be treated with a lot of confidentiality.

Thank you in advance.

Yours faithfully,

Jacinta W. Nzina

Tel: 0721715793/0735031313

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE FEMALE STUDENTS

Introduction

My name is Jacinta Wayua Nzina from Machakos University. Currently I am doing my research in Med in Educational Planning. The purpose of this questionnaire is to investigate *socio-economic factors that influence female students' retention in public secondary schools in Mukaa sub-county*. Please, be honest as you respond to the questions in the questionnaire

Instructions

1. You are not required to write your name in this questionnaire
2. Indicate your choice by putting a tick (√). You are required to tick only the choice you think is the most appropriate.
3. Please answer all the questions in the questionnaire.
4. The information you give will be treated with a lot of confidentiality.

SECTION A; Demographic information

1. Indicate the type of your school

Girls secondary school ()

Mixed secondary school ()

2. Indicate the category of your school

County school ()

Sub-County ()

SECTION B: socio-economic factors

1. Family financial status

a) Describe the type of family you come from economically.

Poor ()

Middle ()

Wealthy ()

b) Approximate the total amount of money earned by your family per year.

Less than 50,000 ()

50,000- 100,000 ()

100,000- 150,000 ()

150,000-200,000 ()

Over 200,000 ()

c) Who pays your school fees?

Parents ()

Guardians ()

Well-wishers ()

d) Have you ever been sent home for school fees?

Yes ()

No ()

e) If yes, did you come back immediately?

Yes ()

No ()

f) Are there some students in your class who drop out of schools due to lack of school fees?

Yes ()

No ()

a) How adequate are the availability of finance to your academic needs?

Adequate ()

Inadequate ()

Very inadequate ()

b) To what extent does the financial status of your family affect your education?

Very little ()

Little ()

Great ()

Very great ()

2. Parents' education level

a) What is your parent's level of education?

Mother

PhD ()

Masters ()

Bachelors ()

Diploma ()

Secondary level ()

Primary level ()

Father

PhD ()

Masters ()

Bachelors ()

Diploma ()

Secondary level ()

Primary level ()

b) Describe the occupation of your parents.

Mother _____

Father _____

c) To what extent does the education level of your parent(s) affect your education?

Very little ()

Little ()

Great ()

Very great ()

3. Family size

a) How many are you in your family?

b) How many of your elder siblings never went to secondary school? _____

c) How many of your siblings have dropped out of secondary school? _____

d) How many of your siblings have completed secondary school education? _____

e) How many of your siblings are in primary school? _____

f) Does the family size affect your studies?

Yes () No ()

4. Parents' marital status

a) that is the marital status of your parent?

Single ()

Married ()

Divorced ()

Widow ()

b) Who do you stay with?

Father ()

Mother ()

Both ()

c) Are the parents (s) supportive in your education?

Yes ()

No ()

SECTION C: retention of female students

a) How many female students in your class?_____

b) How many female students in your class that dropped out of school since form 1?

Thank you

APPENDIX C

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CLASS TEACHERS

Introduction

My name is Jacinta Wayua Nzina from Machakos University. Currently I am carrying out a research in Med. in educational planning. The purpose of this questionnaire is to investigate the *socio – economic factors that influence female students’ retention in public secondary schools in Mukaa sub – county*. Please be honest as you respond to the questions of the questionnaire.

Instruction

1. You are not required to write your name.
2. Indicate your choice by putting a tick(√). You are required to tick only one choice which you think is the most appropriate.
3. Please answer all the questions in the questionnaire.
4. The information you give will be treated with a lot of confidentiality.

SECTION A; Demographic information

1. What is your gender?

Male

Female

2. What is your highest level of education?

PhD

Masters ()

Bachelors ()

Diploma ()

A-Level ()

3. What is the nature of the school?

Mixed school ()

Girls school ()

4. Category of the school

County school ()

Sub-County school ()

SECTION B: Socio-economic factors and female students' retention

In your own opinion, to what extent do the following socio-economic factors influence retention of female students in your class?

1. Family financial status.

a) No extent ()

b) To some extent ()

c) To great extent ()

Give a reason for your answer above. _____

2. Parents' level of education.

a) No extent ()

- b) To some extent ()
- c) To great extent ()

Give a reason for your answer above _____

3. Family size.

- a) No extent ()
- b) To some extent ()
- c) To great extent ()

Explain your answer above _____

4. Parents' marital status.

- a) No extent ()
- b) To some extent ()
- c) To great extent ()

Explain your answer above _____

SECTION C: Retention of female students

a) How many female students in your class? _____

b) How many female students in your class that were admitted in form 1 in the year 2016?

c) How many female students have dropped out of school in your class so far? _____

Thank you

APPENDIX D

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PRINCIPALS

Introduction

My name is Jacinta Wayua Nzina from Machakos University. Currently I am carrying out a research in MEd in educational planning. The purpose of this questionnaire is to investigate the *socio – economic factors that influence female students’ retention in public secondary schools in Mukaa sub – county*. Please be honest as you respond to the questions of the questionnaire.

Instructions

1. You are not required to write your name.
2. Indicate your choice by putting a tick (✓). You are required to tick only one choice which you think is the most appropriate.
3. Please answer all the questions in the questionnaire.
4. The information you give will be treated with a lot of confidentiality.

SECTION A; Demographic information

a) Indicate your gender. Male () Female ()

b) What is your highest level of education?

PhD ()

Masters ()

Bachelors ()

Diploma ()

A- Level ()

c) Type of school you are managing

Mixed secondary school ()

Girls secondary school ()

d) How long have you been working in the current station?

Less than 3 years ()

4-6 Years ()

7-9 Years ()

10-12 Years ()

Over 12 Years ()

e) Category of the school

County school ()

Sub-County school ()

SECTION B: Socio-economic factors and female students' retention

1) In your opinion, to what extent does family financial status influence female student's retention in secondary schools in your school?

a) No extent ()

b) To some extent ()

c) To great extent ()

Give a reason for your answer above

2. In your opinion, to what extent do parent's levels of education influence female student's retention in secondary schools in your school?

a) No extent ()

b) To some extent ()

c) To great extent ()

Give a reason for your answer above.

3. To what extent do you think family size influence female students retention in secondary schools in your school?

a) No extent ()

b) To some extent ()

c) To great extent ()

Explain your answer above.

4. How do you rate the extent to which parent's marital status influence female students retention in secondary schools in your school?

- a) No extent ()
- b) To some extent ()
- c) To great extent ()

Explain your answer above.

SECTION C: Retention of female students

- a) How many form 4 female students in your school? _____
- b) How many female students did you admit in form 1 in the year 2016? _____
- c) How many female students dropped out of your school in the course of the 3 years?

Thank you

APPENDIX E
DOCUMENTARY ANALYSIS

| Year | Class | Enrolment of female students | No. of students who dropped out |
|-------------|--------------|---|--|
| 2016 | Form 1 | | |
| 2017 | Form 2 | | |
| 2018 | Form 3 | | |
| 2019 | Form 4 | | |

APPENDIX F

AUTHORIZATION LETTER

REPUBLIC OF KENYA



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

State Department of Early Learning and Basic Education

Telegrams: "EDUCATION"

Telephone: 0202332822

Mobile: 0727672558

Email: educationmukaa@gmail.com

When replying please quote ref.

Sub- County Education Office

Mukaa Sub-County

Makueni County

P.O BOX 141-90134

YOANI

4th July, 2019

To

Principals (Mukaa Sub County)

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

This office is in receipt of Authorization letter Ref. MKsU/GS/SS/012/VOL.1 dated 4th July 2019 for Jacinta Nzina-E55/7360/2016 to carry out research on

"Socio-economic Factors Influencing Female Student's Retention in Public Secondary Schools In Mukaa Sub County".

During the research the respondents will be found in our schools, it's for this reason that you are requested to offer the necessary assistance to the researcher.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Antony B. Ndung'u'.

Antony B. Ndung'u
For: Sub County Director of Education
Mukaa Sub- County



APPENDIX G
RESEARCH PERMIT

| | |
|---|---|
|  REPUBLIC OF KENYA |  NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION |
| Ref No: 577629 | Date of Issue: 14/August/2019 |
| RESEARCH LICENSE | |
|  | |
| This is to Certify that Ms.. JACINTA NZINA of Machakos University, has been licensed to conduct research in Makueni on the topic: SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS INFLUENCING FEMALE STUDENTS' RETENTION IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MUKAA SUB-COUNTY, MAKUENI COUNTY, KENYA for the period ending : 14/August/2020. | |
| License No: NACOSTI/P/19/341 | |
| 577629 Applicant Identification Number |  Director General NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION |
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