

**AN ASSESSMENT OF USER CHARGES ON LEARNER RETENTION
IN THE PRIMARY EDUCATION OF KALOLENI SUB-COUNTY
KENYA**

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ABSTRACT

All school going age children should remain in schools and exist in a relationship of mental understanding and consultations rather than be out of school as depicted in some of the schools especially on the side of children from poor families. The final beneficiary should be the learners from whom the whole school programme is designed. The purpose of the study was to assess the user charges on learner retention in the Schools of Kaloleni Sub-county Kilifi County. The objectives of the study include, to analyze the user charges on learner retention, to establish the influence of user charges on Learner retention, to determine the effects of user charges on learner retention and to determine strategies that can mitigate the educational costs in the primary schools. The research design used was descriptive research design. The research instruments used included questionnaires and interview guides. Three types of questionnaires were used. Teachers, Headteachers, parents questionnaires and interview guides were selected whereby in each school random sampling was used. The reliability of the research instruments involved ascertaining that the instruments measure what they were intended to measure by testing reliability through the use of test –retest techniques. To eliminate weak points the content validity was discussed with the supervisors and lecturers from the department. The target population was one hundred and sixty one respondents. The sample size comprised of 20 Headteachers, 1 county director of education, 40 teachers and 100 parents. A mixed method research design whereby both qualitative and quantitative research paradigms were employed. Data collected was analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative approaches while data presentation involved the use of frequency tables, pie charts and bar graphs. (SPSS) version 21 was used for statistical data analysis. The results of the study revealed that there was a low retention rate due to the user charges in public primary schools. These concerns can benefit the Government and the education stakeholders in that it informs them of the influence of user charges on learner retention. The study also recommended that the Government through the MOEST to increase the funding for FPE, schools to come up with other alternative sources of funding FPE, parents to be actively involved in the learning of their children and that the constituency Development Fund (CDF) extend its services to the primary school children to enhance high retention levels. The study also recommended that user fees should completely be abolished in the primary schools.