

**AN ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECTS OF HIDDEN COSTS ON THE
RETENTION OF LEARNERS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN
MATINYANI SUB-COUNTY, KITUI COUNTY,
KENYA**

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to assess the effects of hidden costs of education on the retention of learners in public day secondary schools. The objectives of the study were; to establish the effects of the cost of uniform on the retention of the learners, assess the effects of PTA levies on the retention of the learners, assess the effects of lunch cost on the retention of the learners and to determine the strategies used by the principals in the management of the retention of learners. This study adopted explanatory sequential research design which involved collecting, analyzing and mixing both qualitative and quantitative research methods in a single study. The target population was 23 principals, 23 deputy principals, 102 class teachers and 23 PTA chairpersons in public day secondary schools in Matinyani sub-County. It also targeted one District Quality assurance and standards officer (DQASO). Simple random sampling, stratified random sampling as well as purposive sampling were used to select. The sample for the study was; 7 principals, 7 deputy principals, 7 PTA chairpersons, 28 class teachers and 1 District Quality assurance and standards officer (DQASO). Data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Quantitative data was analyzed by Statistical tally system to generate frequency counts from the responses so as to prepare frequency distributions. Percentages were calculated from the responses. The qualitative data was analyzed by merging common themes and presenting them together in narrative form. The findings of this study were; The uniform cost for most schools was high and therefore most parents could not afford to buy thus forcing some learners to drop out of school. The PTA levies influenced the retention of learners as many parents were not able to pay the levies consistently. Their children kept on being sent home and at long last some ends up dropping out of school. The lunch cost seems to be a burden to many parents and this affected the concentration of learners in class leading to poor performance. Most schools do not have income generating activities and therefore relied on the government and parents to finance their projects. The inferential statistics results indicated that all the independent variables have a strong positive correlation between them and the dependent variable as follows; Uniform costs ($r = 0.885$, $p < 0.05$), parents' levies ($r = 0.888$, $p < 0.05$), lunch costs ($r = 0.801$, $p < 0.05$) and school strategies ($r = 0.631$, $p < 0.05$). It was established that the parents' levies and lunch costs had the highest correlations ($r = 0.888$ and $r = 0.801$) respectively. The recommendations for the study were; the government should regulate the cost of school uniform for public day secondary schools and come up with a policy guideline on the material and the cost. The school board of management should reduce the levies charged on parents so that most parents can afford. The schools should make lunch levies affordable to most parents. The schools should be encouraged to start income generating activities so as finance some of their projects.