

**FACTORS AFFECTING RETENTION OF GIRLS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN
OTHAYA, NYERI COUNTY, KENYA.**

BY

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed at gaining an in-depth understanding of the factors affecting educational access, retention and performance. Although a number of studies have been done on factors affecting access, performance and retention in secondary schools in other parts of the Country, no specific study has investigated the continued inaccessibility and low retention among the girl child in secondary schools in highland regions particularly in Nyeri south District in Kenya in spite of free secondary education. Scholars therefore need to develop deeper and explore this problem. The study was based on the following objectives: To determine the factors that affect enrolment, retention and performance in secondary schools among girls within Nyeri south District. To assess the perception of the girl-child and the view of the community regarding educating girls, identify the key challenges that prevent girls from accessing secondary education despite free secondary education and to identify the local people's suggestions and mitigation measures for addressing the problem. The researcher adopted the classical liberal theory of opportunity and social Darwinism. The theory asserts that each person is born with a given amount of capacity, which to a large extent is inherited and cannot be substantially changed. It also states that social mobility is promoted by equal opportunity of education. Literature review was presented in chapter two based on objective of the study which is factors affecting educational transition, performance and retention in secondary schools in arid and semi arid land. This study adopted the descriptive survey design. The total population for this study was 1280 respondents which consisted of 120 teachers, 800 students and 360 parents. The study was conducted in Othaya town of Central province, in Kenya. A sample of between 10% and 20% of the population was taken for this study.. The study focused on five secondary schools in which 120 students were involved. The target group included a sample of 18 teachers, and 54 parents.

The study used simple random sampling technique to select the study respondents particularly the teachers and parents. Simple lottery was used to identify the respondents. Piloting was done using test-retest; the instruments were pre-tested in two schools in Nyeri south District. Piloting was done with the sole purpose of detecting any weakness and find out if the questionnaires were clear to the respondents. The instruments were scrutinized by my supervisors and lecturers in the department to determine its validity and used test-retest method to assess the reliability of data, where the co-efficient of internal consistency was established at 0.86. The 0.86 point indicated a high degree of reliability of the instrument. The questionnaire for 120 students and 54 parents were given and self administered in schools in separate class by the students and collected by the researcher after three days. For out of school, it was administered through snowballing where the researcher interviewed specific girls who dropped out of school. In term of qualitative analysis, the researcher organized the data thematically. The major factors affecting either performance, retention or performance among girls in Nyerisouth District were mostly lack of school fees or early marriage. The study results will be used for providing useful information to the policy makers on the implementation of workable strategies that will promote girls' education in the highland regions. In conclusion information gathered would contribute to knowledge by analyzing factors and situations that limit girl-child transition, retention and performance in highland regions. It also helps to the contribution of knowledge by enabling policy makers in the ministry of education and recommended that relevant stakeholders to improve overall standard of education in highland regions especially for girl-child and take into account mitigation measures.