

ABSTRACT

In the last decade, debates about gender and schooling have taken a surprising turn. Currently in many parts of the world, there has grown a worrying trend of low boy-child retention in public secondary schools in many learning institutions. Although, globally, Education authorities are aware that this has far reaching consequences, there is still insufficient understanding of the exact factors associated with these worrying trends of secondary school students' low retention in the Kenyan context. This study, therefore, attempts to fill the information gap by exploring the contributions of selected factors to boy-child's retention in public day secondary schools in Nyamira Sub County, Kenya. Specific objectives for the study were to find out: the contribution of house hold factors to boy-child's retention in public day secondary schools; the contribution of school-based factors to boy child's retention in public day secondary schools; the contribution of community-based factors to boy child's retention in public day secondary schools and the mitigation measures that may be put in place to improve boy child's retention in public day secondary schools. The study used mixed methods approach. Within the mixed method approach, the concurrent triangulation research design was employed. The units of analysis were 33 public day secondary schools. The target population were therefore 33 principals, 33 HODs guidance and counselling, 33 Chairpersons of Parents associations (PAs), 47 Class teachers, 2 ZQASOs and 1935 students. Krejcie and Morgan sample size determination table was used to select a sample of 28 principals, 28 chair persons of PAs and 28 HODs guidance and counseling, 42 class teachers and 321 students selected through stratified random sampling, 2 DQASOs were picked out through purposive sampling. Questionnaires, Interview schedule and document analysis guides were used to collect data which was analysed and coding done before data analysis. Before the actual study, a pilot study was conducted in three public day secondary schools. These schools were not included in the actual study. The study employed the split-half method to establish the reliability of the questionnaire which was found to be $r=0.848$. The validity of the instrument was established by expert judgement of supervisors. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics while thematic analysis was used to analyse qualitative data. The study established that there was a strong correlation between household factors and the boy-child retention in public day secondary schools as predicted by the regression model. It was also established that the school-based factors had a strong ($r = 0.826$) positive correlation with boy-child secondary retention in public day secondary schools as predicted by the regression model. On the other hand, the study established the community-based factors explained 55.4% of the boy-child retention in public day secondary schools as represented by the adjusted R^2 . The study lastly established that in order to improve boy child retention in public day secondary schools, there was need for parents to improve on their parenting practices, teachers to provide unconditional love and counselling services to the boy-child and the government to establish and implement policy on boy-child retention. In conclusion, the study found out that the trend of the boy child retention in secondary schools remained a social issue. In this study a number of issues could not be comprehensively covered because of a wide range of limitations. The researcher therefore recommends that another study be conducted on the role of parents on boy-child retention in secondary schools.