

## ABSTRACT

Despite the government introduction of free primary education in 2003 in its quest to increasing access, retention and equity education, child survival rate in primary schools in Mbita Sub-county is still 74.1% and is below the national survival rate of 83.3%. It was due to this low retention rate that the study was set to investigate the effects of home-based lunch on child retention in the primary schools in Mbita. To achieve this, the study was set on four specific objectives focused on identifying the effects of home-based lunch, determining factors influencing home-based lunch, establishing the relationship between attrition and factors influencing home-based lunch and suggesting lunch intervention measures to enhance child retention in the primary schools. To realize the set objectives, the study was based on a conceptual framework drawn from the Classical Liberal Theory focused on Equity of Opportunity in education provision as postulated by an American Educator Horace Mann. The framework explains the relationship between the dependent and the independent variables in home-based lunch provision. The study used descriptive survey design which was conducted in 42 public primary schools sampled from the 98 primary schools in Mbita Sub-county. The study used the precision rate and confidence level derivative to obtain the sample, where the sample size  $n = z^2.p.q.N/e^2 (N-1) + z^2.p.q$  defined the 42 schools. The study also adopted the stratified random sampling to accommodate social, economic, physical and environmental differences in the region of the study. To obtain the stratum sample size, the proportionate stratification was used based on each stratum's share where,  $n_x = n \cdot l_x / n$  defined the stratum sample size for the Island, Township and Rural regions of Mbita Sub-county. Data was collected using questionnaires sent to head teachers and class teachers of the sampled schools, while interview schedules were used with class prefects to collect more information regarding the effects of home-based lunch on retention in the study area. The SPSS program for MS windows was also used to analyze the questionnaires. The study used frequencies and percentages because they easily communicated the research findings to majority of the readers. Descriptive statistics involving regression analysis was used to analyze the quantitative data to establish the relationship between attrition and factors influencing home-based lunch. The study found out that home-based lunch provision contributed to absenteeism, lateness, transfers, attrition thus reducing child retention capacity of schools in Mbita. It was also noted that home-based lunch resulted to children walking long distances to and from schools, preparing lunch, not getting lunch at home, becoming truant and others incur accidents as they walk home every other day. The regression analysis confirmed high correlation of 0.81 between attrition and factors influencing home-based lunch.