



RESEARCH ARTICLE

STUDENTS' PERCEPTION ON THE ROLE OF HEAD TEACHER IN IMPLEMENTATION OF  
GIRLS' READMISSION POLICY IN KENYA

Omulako Eman Jairo, Zachariah K. Kosgei\*, Kurgat Joyce and Saina Shadrack.

Moi University, School of Education, Department of Educational Management & Policy Studies,  
P.O Box 3900-30100, Eldoret

ARTICLE INFO

**Article History:**

Received 3<sup>rd</sup> April, 2011  
Received in revised form  
17<sup>th</sup> May, 2011  
Accepted 21<sup>st</sup> June, 2011  
Published online 26<sup>th</sup> June 2011

**Key words:**

Re admission policy,  
Implementation and perception.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of study was to investigate students' perception on head teacher's role in implementation of girls' re-admission policy. The study was to help highlight the plight of girls who drop out of school as a result of pregnancy with a view of giving them a chance to continue with education through re-admission. To achieve this objective the study examined students' perception on head teachers' administrative, counseling and support roles. Students' perception was the dependent variable whereas the head teachers' age, gender, educational level and teaching experience were independent variables. The study was based on Tinto's (1975) model of student retention which stipulates that a student persists or drops out depending on their degree of both academic and social integration. The research design was a case study where questionnaires and interview schedule were used to collect data. Target populations were form three students, head teachers, counseling teachers, class teachers and the District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer. Sampling techniques used in the study were Simple Random, Stratified and Purposive. Reliability of the instruments was established through a pilot study in a school outside the study area. Cronbach's alpha was used to assess the reliability coefficient that yielded 0.82. Validity of instruments was determined through expert judgment involving discussions with researcher's Supervisors, Lecturers and Colleagues. Data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The study established that head teachers have not implemented the girls' re-admission policy to the expectation as reflected in the poor discharge of administrative, counseling and support roles. It was also established that head teachers' educational level and teaching experience have a positive influence on administrative role whereas teaching experience has a positive influence on both counseling and support roles. The study recommends that; the Ministry of Education to review the policy so as to come up with appropriate guidelines for implementation, counseling to be strengthened in schools, further training for head teachers and introduction of support program for the girls who drop out of school due to pregnancy.

© Copy Right, IJCR, 2011, Academic Journals. All rights reserved

INTRODUCTION

After the National symposium of Education for girls held in Machakos in 1994, the Ministry of Education declared support for the girl mothers and officially started working on the process of re-entry. By the time of Mauritius consultation organized by FAWE in 1994, Kenya was already officially re-admitting teenage mothers. By 1996, the Ministry of Education formulated guidelines on the re-entry which were finally circulated to the Education authorities. According to MOE (1998), the guidelines on re-entry are; Girls who become pregnant should be admitted back to school unconditionally, head teachers, District and Municipal Education Officers should be directed to assist such girls to join other schools to avoid psychological and emotional suffering, intensive

counseling should be provided to affected girls, parents, teachers, and other girls in school. Furthermore, once a girl is sent home, the parents should be summoned to the school and receive some counseling and thereafter they should take their daughter home. Head teachers and other teachers to be human and show understanding and patience while handling cases of this nature, parents should seek re-admission of their daughter to school after the baby is weaned and Head teachers should provide the necessary help in this regard. In cases of any problem, the Provincial, District and Municipal Education Officers should assist. Finally, those who make girls pregnant should be exposed. For example, teachers and other adults in the community should face legal action. Boys should be given counseling so that they can take responsibility for their actions. This paper therefore reviews how head teachers implement the above guidelines at the secondary school level with an aim of strengthening implementation.

\*Corresponding author: [kosgeizach@yahoo.com](mailto:kosgeizach@yahoo.com)

## Study background

Kenya's education policy fully embraces the Jomtien declaration of 1990 which officially pronounces "Education for All" irrespective of sex, religion, ethnic and social background, economic status and colour. The Ministry of Education endeavors to eliminate gender disparities and promote social equity through provision of basic education for all, including females (MOE, 1998). However, according to Elimu News (2007) Kenyan education system is still characterized by gender disparities. In Kenya, tremendous effort has been put to address the root causes of girls dropping out from school. Major events that have facilitated the discussion of the problem include the national symposium on education of Girls (1994) in which the ministry addressed various issues including re-entry of the teenage mother into school. At this event, three recommendations were spelt out in favor of the continuing education of the teenage mother. According to Mpesha (2000), these recommendations include adoption of a policy of re-entry to permit pregnant girls back to school system after delivery, setting up special bridging centers for young mothers where they could continue with their formal education and /or specialized training while breast feeding their babies and creating out of school opportunities for out of school girls and exploit informal sector apprenticeships for them. In addition, introduce flexible models of attendance so that institutions operate at full capacity during the day and evening, throughout the week, month and year to allow for full attendance and completion of courses.

Mpesha (2000) further contends that, the problem of teenage mother's re-entry into the school system continues to demand attention. The re-entry initiative faces problems. Society's negative attitude towards the pregnant girl and teenage mother is a major hindrance to the re-entry initiative. Besides, data collection on this subject is quite problematic as head teachers, parents and teenage mothers are not willing to divulge information. On the other hand the more progressive and able parents (if they are not religious enough) are quick to get solutions to the immediate problem of their daughters' pregnancy. Though abortion in Kenya is illegal, some secretly organize abortions for their daughters. Those most vulnerable are those girls who are rejected by their families and resort to seeking a solution through crude abortion or run away from home. Homes and societies that try to assist the rejected girls are not always ready to cope with large numbers because of financial constraint. Counselors are also sometimes not well informed on the subject they are teaching and as a result are not able to give the needed guidance and lastly reading materials to assist the counselors have been prepared but mainly addressing the issue of HIV/AIDS.

## Students' perception on head teacher's roles

A study by Nair and Fisher (2001) on effective instructional methods based on tertiary/ higher and senior secondary education levels found that students at the tertiary levels perceived their classroom environment more favorably in terms of innovative teaching methods employed by their instructors in classes. Formal lecture system which is often passive was noted to contribute to low retention rate and boredom with students. Thus teaching methods that enable

students to get involved with the teaching material stir thinking and encourage less memorization consequently perceived more favorably (World Bank, 2002). Students' favorable perception of a given aspect of campus environment is believed to potentially contribute partially to their liking of such an environment. According to Carnage *et al.* (2009), leadership contributes to organizational learning. Organizational learning in turn influences what happens in the core business of the school- teaching and learning. It also influences student perceptions of the way teachers organize and conduct their instruction and their educational interactions with expectations for their students. Pupils' positive perceptions of teachers' work directly promote their participation in school, academic self-concept and engagement with school. Pupil participation is directly and pupil engagement is indirectly (through retention) related to academic achievement.

According to Jan, *et al.* (2005), a study done in Netherlands to determine ability of graduates to deal with complexity of tasks in which they engage in established that students perceived the new learning environment to be less positive in terms of the clarity of its goals, the usefulness of the textbook and the workload. Improvement in terms of students perceptions of the learning environment and their learning strategies could be expected to be fostered by the implementation of a more advanced staff development program, focusing the curricular assessment system on problem-solving skills, supporting the students in the development of the skills necessary to cope with the demands of the redesigned course, and giving them more opportunities to experience this instructional approach. Though final course examination scores have been the primary criterion for establishing the validity of student evaluations, the scores reflect only a limited view of student learning outcomes. More comprehensive indicators of student learning would go beyond a single exam score, which typically reflects only narrowly defined course objectives. Such indicators might include student perceptions of their increase in interest in the subject, critical thinking skills, interpersonal outcomes (e.g. cooperative abilities), intrapersonal outcomes (e.g. self-understanding) and other broad course outcomes (Koon and Murray, 1995).

## MATERIALS AND METHOD

The research design used in the study was a case study. According to Orodho and Kombo (2002) a case design is ideal for an in depth studies. The study targeted 2500 pupils in 27 mixed day schools and 4 boarding girls' schools in Eldoret West district. The study also targeted 31 head teachers, 31 guiding and counseling teachers, 31 class teachers and the District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer. Stratified sampling was done to ensure a fair representation of each category of schools. The two strata were the pure girls' schools and the mixed schools. Simple random sampling was then done to pick 2 schools from the 4 girls' boarding schools and 14 schools from the 27 mixed schools. Stratified random sampling was used to select 30% of the form 3 students in each of the 14 mixed schools. A total of 103 boys and 52 girls were sampled. Simple random sampling was used to select 30% of the students in each of the 2 single girls' boarding schools. This resulted in a total of 51 students. A total of 206 students were thus sampled to participate in the study.

The choice of head teachers, guiding and counseling teachers, class teachers and the District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer was done through purposive sampling. This was because each school had one head teacher and one guiding and counseling teacher. The target form three class in each school had one class teacher and Eldoret West District had only one DQASO. Thus out of a total number of 16 head teachers, 52% of the total was sampled giving a total of 16 head teachers. Out of a total number of 31 guiding and counseling teachers and 31 class teachers, 52% from each category was sampled giving a total of 16 guiding and counseling teachers and 16 class teachers respectively.

Self administered questionnaires were used by the researcher. According to Kombo and Tromp (2006) questionnaires save on time, information can be collected from large and diverse regions, confidentiality is upheld and there is minimal bias as the questionnaire is presented in paper format. A total of four questionnaires were used in the study. The student's questionnaire covered administrative, counseling and support domains that assessed student's perception on head teacher roles in implementation of girls' re-admission policy. The head teacher's questionnaire had both closed and open ended questions. The questionnaires for head teachers, guiding and counseling teachers and class teachers examined the respondents' role in implementation of girls' the re-admission policy. Interview schedule was also used to collect information. According to Mutai (2000) an interview schedule is in a sense an oral questionnaire. The interviewee gives the needed information orally and face to face. There is neither complex equipment to be used nor a need to spend time learning new skills. The interview schedule for the DQASO had unstructured questions. The instruments were piloted in Eldoret East District because of similarities it has in terms of population and vicinity to the study area. The Cronbach's alpha was used to assess the reliability coefficient that yielded 0.82. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) any value above 0.5 is considered appropriate threshold. However this study had limitations. The variables in the study could not be measured directly. The roles of the head teacher are dependent on students' perception. Thus the use of attitude test to measure the roles of head teacher has an influence on the desired result. The study was also limited to a sample of a population within Eldoret West District. Implications and generalizations of the study findings to other areas of Kenya should be done with caution since situations are different in other Kenyan Districts as a result of differences in socio-economic development.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The study investigated students' perception on the administrative role of head teacher in implementation of girls' re-admission policy. Based on students' perception it was revealed that head teachers have not carried out the administrative role to the expectation as shown in poor discharge of the following administrative tasks; head teachers do not invite girls who drop out of school due to the pregnancy for re-admission. The decision to seek for re-admission is left to the parents. This concurs with Yungungu (2006) who observes that, girls are still disappearing from the school system except for those whose parents make individual effort to facilitate their rejoining the school system. It was further

revealed that most head teachers recommend that the girls be re-admitted in other schools. This agrees with Koech (1999) who observes that many school heads admitted that they were not willing to re-admit such girls but could help them gain admission in other schools. However, on the ground, head teachers rarely recommend these girls for re-admission to other schools. Girls re-admitted to school are normally faced with a dilemma whenever they want to seek permission to be away from school either to take care of their babies, seek medical attention, and attend to their families for those who are married among other factors. Majority prefer to conceal the motive for seeking permission as result of stigma. However results from study indicated that head teachers do not give permission to re-admitted girls. This is in contrast to MOE (1998) which states that head teachers and other teachers should be human, understanding and patient while handling cases of girls who drop out of school because of pregnancy.

In an effort to tame rising cases of pregnancies in schools Ngirachu (2009) suggests that school girls to be encouraged to undergo voluntary pregnancy tests once a term. On suspicion of pregnancy the school is to inform the girls' parents or guardians and have the students undergo medical examination. These contrasts with the findings of the study which established most head teachers' do not organize for pregnancy tests. This explains why girls who become pregnant just disappear from the school secretly and some resort to procuring abortion. Head teachers do not encourage re-admitted girls to participate in games. Co-curricular activities form an important part of the school curriculum. Games in particular are crucial in enabling the students to develop their talents besides providing a platform for them to interact freely. Head teachers do not treat re-admitted girls equally like other students. This is in disagreement with KIE (2002) which states that teachers can help the learner to develop and nurture positive self esteem through treating all the children equally irrespective of their gender and creating a gender friendly environment in the classroom. However head teachers do not compel re-admitted girls to repeat their previous class. Head teachers give these girls an opportunity to choose between repeating and proceeding to the next class. This is a good attribute as girls are given an opportunity to make decision on their academic progress.

The study further revealed that head teachers have not carried out the counseling role to the expectation as shown in poor discharge of the following counseling tasks; According to KIE (2004), teachers especially those involved in guidance and counseling services, play a major role in helping the learners to accept and be comfortable with, and value their being male or female. However, results of the study indicated that most head teachers rarely invite speakers to talk to students on dangers of unsafe sex. This concurred with guiding and counseling teachers who stated that speakers are invited only once a term. Results also indicated that head teachers do not speak to students on assembly on dangers of unsafe sex. As a custodian of student morality, head teachers need to be in the forefront in advising students to avoid engaging in sexual relationships that lead to pregnancies. As Mburu (2009) puts it, children as young as 12 years have multiple partners and they seem to have little or no awareness of the possible consequences of their actions. Head teachers do not allow re-admitted girls to guide and counsel others on dangers of

unsafe sex. Peer counseling produces positive results in schools because the peer counselors freely interact with fellow peers and share freely on personal issues affecting them. Head teachers can utilize peer counselors to reach out to re-admitted girls with an aim of helping them to cope with learning. According to FAWE (2001) heads of institutions have a responsibility to institute empowerment programs for girls to help them build confidence, enhance self esteem and nurture assertiveness. However findings of the study revealed that most head teachers do not advise girls to have self confidence and assertive in making decisions concerning sexual relationships. As KIE (2004) observes, teachers can help learners develop and nurture positive self esteem by creating a gender friendly environment through avoiding words, gestures or actions that demean the dignity of the female or male child. In contrast results from the study revealed that head teachers do not advise students against joking and jeering at re-admitted girls. These results agree with counseling teachers who stated that re-admitted girls suffer victimization. Head teachers do not encourage the re-admitted girls to work hard in class. This explains why these girls perform poorly academically. As Wamahu and Keria (1996) puts it, increased absenteeism, lowered academic performance, lowered self esteem and stigmatization are some of the real and perceived consequences of early pregnancies and young motherhood for the school girl.

Results further indicated that head teachers have not carried out the support role to the expectation as indicated in the poor discharge of the ensuing support tasks; head teachers not help re-admitted girls pay for their medical treatment. These contrasts with Ngirachu (2009) who observes that the Ministry of Basic Education and Public Works have guidelines which require that a student who falls pregnant should be supported to make at least four visits to the ante-natal clinic. Results further indicated head teachers do not help re-admitted girls get money for their upkeep. Girls re-admitted to school normally play dual roles of mother and student. Thus they need funds to meet the cost of personal effects for self and baby. It is further reinforced by class teachers who observed that majority of re-admitted girls come from poor families. Head teachers also do not help the re-admitted girls acquire uniform. This is in agreement with counseling teachers and class teachers who stated that the school does not meet the needs of re-admitted girls. A student who lacks such basic requirements normally suffers low self esteem and this may have negative impact on their studies.

Head teachers do not help re-admitted girls raise funds for school fees. As Kamaara (2005) puts it, single mothers may lack stable income to educate her children. Head teachers have not provided adequate reading materials that help students avoid risky sexual behavior. This is further reinforced by majority of counseling teachers who stated that the school administration does not support the counseling department through the provision of necessary reading materials. Lack of adequate reading materials explains why students engage in pre-marital sexual relationships that lead to pregnancies. As head teachers pursue further studies they acquire more knowledge which enables them to be more skillful in carrying out their tasks. This was grounded in the study which revealed that education level of head teacher influences dissemination of administrative tasks. This was indicated by a chi statistic

with 4 degrees of freedom,  $X^2$  of 17.817 and  $\alpha < 0.05 = 0.001$ . Furthermore the teaching experience of head teachers influences the carrying out of the administrative role with a chi statistic of 8 degrees of freedom,  $X^2$  of 30.866 and  $\alpha < 0.05 = 0.000$ . It is deduced that teaching experience is important in performance of administrative role. A head teacher who has taught for many years is presumed to have acquired more hands on experience in performance of administrative tasks in implementation of girls' re-admission policy. Teaching experience of head teachers influences the performance of counseling role. This was indicated by a chi statistic with 8 degrees of freedom,  $X^2 = 16.135$ , and  $\alpha = 0.040$ . As a result of many years in service head teachers have acquired broad knowledge hence are better placed in counseling the girl child. Teaching experience of head teachers has influence on support role. This was indicated by a chi statistic with 8 degrees of freedom,  $X^2$  of 25.640 and  $\alpha < 0.05 = 0.001$ . This implies that head teachers who have spent more years in the teaching profession are more knowledgeable in ways to assist the girl owing to their long service. Thus they are able to support the girls.

### Conclusions

The implementation of girls' re-admission policy has been left at the discretion of head teachers to decide whether to re-admit or not (Mulama 2008). However results from the study indicated that head teachers have not implemented the policy to the expectation as seen in poor discharge of administrative, counseling and support tasks. These calls for the Ministry of Education to review the policy and come up with appropriate mechanisms to enable head teachers implement the policy effectively. The head teachers' educational level and teaching experience has a positive influence on administrative role. Furthermore head teachers teaching experience has a positive influence on counseling and support roles respectively. The Ministry of Education needs to consider the head teachers educational level and teaching experience for the policy to be implemented effectively.

### Recommendations

1. The Ministry of Education to review the re-admission policy and come up with appropriate guidelines that will enable head teachers to effectively implement the girls' re-admission policy in secondary schools.
2. The Ministry of Education to facilitate further training for head teachers since the educational level of head teacher determines how effective a head teacher discharges administrative duties in implementation of girls' re-admission policy.
3. The teaching experience of head teachers to be considered by the Ministry of Education if girls' re-admission policy is to be implemented effectively.
4. The Ministry of Education to strengthen guiding and Counseling in schools as a strategy of implementing the girls' re-admission policy.
5. The Ministry of Education to come up with a program where girls re-admitted to school after dropping out due to pregnancy can receive support.

## REFERENCES

- Carnage, D, McCormick, A. and Adams, D, 2009. *How Does a School Leaders Role Influence Student Achievement? A Review of Research Findings and Best Practices*. Connexions. As retrieved on 30<sup>th</sup> August, 2009 at <http://www.cnx.org/content/M1971/latest>
- Elimu News, 2007.UNESCO, Nairobi Newsletter Vol. 9, August-September.
- FAWE News, 2001. *News Magazine about the Education of girls and Women in Africa* September 2001. Vol 9, No. 3 Pg 17 – 19.
- Jan F.H ,Mien S.R, Wim H, 2005. Influence of Redesigning a Learning Environment on Student Perception and Learning Strategies. *Learning Environment Research. Springer Netherlands. Vol 8 .No. 1*.As retrieved on 10<sup>th</sup> April 2010.
- Kamara E. K. 2005. *Gender. Youth Sexuality and HIV/AIDS. A Kenyan Experience* AMECEA Gaba Publications. Kenya.
- KIE, 2002. *Life skills Education for Behaviour Change*. Facilitator's Handbook. KIE Nairobi .
- KIE, 2004.*The Guiding and Counseling Teachers Hand book*. KIE Nairobi.
- Koech, 1999. *Totally Intergraded Quality Education and Training (TIQET)*. Report on the Commission of Inquiry into the Education system of Kenya. August 2009 Nairobi
- Kombo D.K. and Tromp D.L.A. 2006. Proposal and Thesis writing. An Introduction. Paulines Publications Africa
- Koon and Murray, 1995. *Student Evaluations of Faculty: Concerns Raised in Literature, and Possible Solutions*. As retrieved on 10<sup>th</sup> April 2010. <http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi-Mofcr/is-2-40/ia-n16689772/>
- Mburu K. 2009. 3rd February. Increase in the Number of Teen Parents is Alarming. Daily Nation p 11.
- M.O.E. 1998. *Master Plan on Education and Training 1997-2010*. Republic of Kenya Nairobi
- Mpesha N. 2000. *FAWE: Curbing Drop out. Re- entry Programme for Teenage Mothers*. The Case of Kenya. Regional Ministerial Consultation on Closing the Gender gap in Education. Kampala. Uganda. 7<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> November 2000. As retrieved on 30<sup>th</sup> July 2008. <http://www.FAWE.org/dropout/contents/indexhtml>.
- Mulama, 2008. *Stopping Pregnancy from being the End of the Educational Road* Retrieved on 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2008, <http://www.Ipsnews.nset/africa/not.aso?Id News 34137>
- Mutai K. B. 2000. How to write Quality Research Proposal. A complete and Simplified Recipe. Thelley Publications
- Nair, C.S. and Fisher, D.L. 2001. Learning Environments and Student Attitudes to Science at the senior secondary and Tertiary levels. *Issues in Educational Research*, vol. II, Monash University.
- Ngirachu J. 2009, 6<sup>th</sup> February. *Students to take Pregnancy Tests* .Daily Nation. p 8. As retrieved on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2010. <http://www.marsgroupkenya.org/multimedia/story>
- Wamahiu S. P. and Keria S. 1996. *Unpublished. Mar.V,54p. Abstract*. As retrieved on 27<sup>th</sup> June, 2009. [www.poline.org/docs/1330/146493.html](http://www.poline.org/docs/1330/146493.html).
- World Bank, 2002. *Constructing Knowledge Societies: New Challenges for Tertiary Education*. Washington D.C
- Yungungu M.A. and Wambua K. B. 2006. The Perception of Society on the Education of Girls in Kenya. *The Educator. A Journal of the School of Education, Moi University*. Vol 1-Number 1 P. 146.

\*\*\*\*\*