

**INVESTIGATING THE CAUSES OF PUPILS DROPOUT IN PUBLIC PRIMARY  
SCHOOLS IN IMENTI NORTH SUB COUNTY,  
MERU COUNTY, KENYA**

**BY**

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**JANUARY, 2016**

**DECLARATION**

I declare that this dissertation is my original work and has not been previously published or submitted elsewhere for award of a degree. I also declare that this contains no material written or published by other people except where due reference is made and author duly acknowledged.

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**ABSTRACT**

Education plays a key role in human development through the process of empowering people to improve their well being and participation in national building. Dropout however, poses a serious threat to gains in education despite the government emphasis on Education for All (EFA) by this year (2015). The purpose of this study was to investigate the causes of pupils' dropout in public primary schools of Imenti North Sub-County. The objectives of the study were to determine the influence of socio-economic factors, school based factors and pupil characteristics on dropout in public primary schools in Imenti North Sub-County. The study used descriptive survey design targeting 59 head teachers and 671 teachers from all the 59 public primary schools in Imenti North Sub-County. Stratified random sampling was used to select 18 schools, 18 head teachers and 108 teachers. The study used questionnaires on teachers and head teachers to collect information on dropout. Data was analyzed using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). Findings were presented using frequency tables and bar graphs. This study established that low socio-economic status, poor school performance, drug and substance abuse, peer pressure among others contribute to pupil dropout. Poverty leading to financial problems was also cited as a cause of primary school dropout. The study recommends that the government should take stern measures against traders who employ children to pave way for these children to go to school. Head teachers should come up with school policies for drug free learning environment and the administrators to play an active role in enforcing the policy. A similar study should be carried in other sub counties that were not covered by the study. Similar studies should be carried out among other students groups like high school students.

**Keywords:** Dropout, Imenti North, Meru County, Public Primary Schools

## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my mother Grace Karimi and my father Peter Thiruaine who laid the foundation upon which I have confined to build.

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## OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

- Access:** Refers to the total school population at a given time.
- Child:** Refers to any human being under the age of eighteen years.
- Dropout:** A pupil who has withdrawn from school prematurely.
- Education:** The knowledge acquired from time of birth till death
- Free primary education:** Refers to the waiver of all forms of contributions to education by parents in the primary school level. The government shoulders the financing of education. This applies to public schools only.
- Primary education:** Formal primary education in Kenya which is the first level in the formal education that caters for the age group of 6-13 years within the school system.
- Public School:** A school that receives financial support from the government. Tuition is paid for education but relatively lower compared to other types of schools.
- Pupil :** A child who is in school to receive education
- Pupil characteristics:** Refers to a combination of cognitive, physical, social and emotional needs of pupils and the factors that influence these needs.
- Retention:** Ability of pupils to remain and progress in school until they complete their education cycle
- School based factors:** The conditions inherent to the school that either limit or enhance the involvement of pupils in primary school education.
- Socio-economic factors:** A combination of social and economic conditions which either limit or enhance pupils' retention in primary education.

## **ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

- AIDS** - Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
- CBS** - Central Bureau of Statistics
- DEO** - District Education Officer
- EFA** - Education For All
- EMIS** - Education Management Information System
- FAWE** - Forum for African Women Educationalist
- FGM** - Female Genital Mutilation
- FPE** - Free Primary Education
- GEC** - Girl Education Challenge
- HIV** - Human Immunodeficiency Virus
- KCPE** - Kenya Certificate of Primary Education
- KNPHC**- Kenya National Population and Housing Census
- MoE** - Ministry of Education
- NARC** - National Alliance for Rainbow Coalition
- SPSS** - Statistical Package for Social Sciences
- UNESCO**- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

## **CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

Education is a fundamental right of every person, a key to other human rights, the heart of all developments, the prerequisite for equity, diversity and lasting peace. It is seen as a powerful means to reduce poverty and achieve economic growth (Breton, 2004). It empowers people, improves individuals' earning potential, promotes health population, is a major determinant of democracy and builds a competitive economy (Hannum and Buchmann, 2002). Few global goals have been as consistently and deeply supported as the notion that every child in every country should have a chance to complete at least primary education (World Bank, 2003).

The Government of Kenya (GOK), has been committed to increasing access to education to its citizens at all levels. Policy makers, educational planners and other stake holders have been concerned with developing viable, effective and sustainable strategies that will enhance the development of education. For nations, education opens doors to economic and social prosperity, dynamic workforce and well informed citizens who are able to compete and co-operate in global arena. It gives voice to the disadvantaged and it is fundamental to constructing society (World Bank, 2003).

The universal declaration of human rights, adopted in 1948 declared that everyone has a right to education. This call is further supported by the World Conference on Education For All (EFA) held in Jomtein, Thailand in 1990 where representatives from 155 countries and organizations pledged to provide education for all, and its follow up conference in Dakar, Senegal, in 2000 (Republic of Kenya). The intention of these country representatives was that, children, youth and adults would benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet their basic learning needs. Since then, remarkable progress has been made in getting young children in developing countries into primary school education. However, still millions

of children drop out of school, shifting the problem from getting into school to keeping them there.

In half the countries in South and West Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, one of every three children who start school, drops out before completion (UNESCO, 2009). Children who leave school before they have completed the curriculum do not develop their potential to the fullest and their countries waste scarce resources. It is, therefore, of prime importance to get a better understanding of the factors that drive the decision to stay in school or drop out in developing countries.

Most research on dropout has been conducted in the USA and other highly developed countries. The situation in less developed countries is much unknown. This is a pity because, as Buchmann and Hannum (2002), have already noted, improving our understanding of the determinants of educational participation in developing countries might provide us with new insights into the roots of educational stratification beyond what we already know from Western countries. For instance, there is evidence that in poorer countries, school characteristics are more important for educational achievement than in richer countries and that in Sub-Saharan Africa countries growing up in a single mother family is less detrimental (and sometimes even beneficial) for children's education than in more developed regions, (Lloyd and Blanc, 1996); cited in (Bammeke, 2008).

Kenya introduced Free Primary Education (FPE) in 2003 to enable every child have access to basic education and to improve retention rate. Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) showed that the country registered a national dropout rate of 2.0%-6.5% between 2003 and 2007. This trend of declining enrolment rates and causes of high dropout, though expected to be minimal with FPE, is notable (EMIS, 2009). The gravity of educational wastage as a result of dropping out of school has remained as one of the most noticeable aspects in Kenya education system. A study carried out by Kenya National Population and Housing Census (KNPHC), Central Bureau of statistics (CBS, 2002) revealed that drop out of students in the age of 15-19 years was 41%.

According to Lewin and Caillods (2001) data of school dropout revealed differential rates for boys and girls. Boys drop out because of economic factors while girls drop out for family reasons including pregnancy and motherhood. Low completion rates caused by school dropouts constitute a serious drain and wastage on national resources not only because education consumes a large proportion of national resources, but also because the government and her citizens continue to look upon education as a productive investment. Therefore, in an effort to curb the dropout of pupils, there was need to investigate the causes of dropout in public primary schools.

### ***1.1.1 The Concept of School Dropout***

Since independence, like many other countries, the Kenyan government sought to expand education. While the education opportunities continue to expand, internal efficiency problems in form of dropout and repetition continue to be pervasive. Despite free primary education policy introduced by the Kenyan Government in 2003, a substantial number of children who would benefit from it are out of school. Even though gains have been made between 1998 and 2009, the presence of high dropout is however detrimental to these gains.

According to Kenya Demographic and Health survey, among children ages 6 to13, enrolment improved from 87 percent to 94 percent between 1998 and 2009 but 6 percent of the nearly 8,000 children sampled were still out of school (Kenya Demographic and Health Survey,2010). While many pupils enrol only 47% complete primary level (Republic of Kenya, 1998, MOEST, 2003). Free primary education has not ensured total enrolment for primary school age-going children, in North Eastern for instance, where the highest index of poverty is recorded nationally, only one out of three children attend primary school, (Achoka, Odebero, Maiyo and Mauluko, 2007).

In some regions, primary schools are sparsely located such that young children have difficulties in attending those schools. Moreover, people who live in ASALS have peculiar

needs related to nomadic lifestyle. Establishment of low-cost boarding schools has failed to alleviate dropout because expansion and sustainability emerge as added concerns.

Participation of the girl-child continues to be a challenge in some communities in Kenya. In particular, the cultural practice of early marriage for young girls haunts many families as their young girls are withdrawn from school and married to comparatively old men. Achoka *et al* (2007) in their survey on the inherent concerns of access to basic education in Kenya found out that most disparities occurred in Nairobi and North Eastern. Enrolment in Coast (83.6%), Nairobi (74.5%) and North Eastern (23.0%) were below the mark of 100%. In spite of the fact that 18,453,583 (51%) of the Kenyan population is female, the study also established that girl-child access to primary school was less than that of the boy-child in most areas except for Central and Western Kenya.

### **1.1.2 Research Contexts**

Imenti North Sub-County is in Meru County. It borders Imenti Central, Buuri and Tigania West Sub-Counties. The education office of the Sub-County is located within Meru Town. There are three (3) education zones in the Sub-County, namely:- Municipality, Miriga Mieru East and Ntima. The Sub-County has 59 public primary schools, 19,433 pupils and 671 teachers.

### **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Basic education is a pre-requisite for attaining the Kenyan vision 2030 in which the country is expected to be industrialized. One of the draw back in attaining EFA and vision 2030 is school dropout. Despite the huge expenditure by the government in providing free education, a substantial amount of this expenditure is spent on those who drop out of school. This is wastage of the scarce national resources since the dropouts will not have acquired the knowledge and skills expected of them.

Dropping out is a serious problem because it denies individual students their fundamental human right to education. There is general consensus that the school dropout

problem has reached epidemic proportions intentionally and has become a global problem confronting the education sector round the world (Wotherspoon, 2004). Studies in India, Rani (2011) found financial difficulties, children not interested in studies, parents not interested in studies, lack of education facilities in the nearby villages and lack of quality education as reasons cited for dropping out.

In almost all developing countries school dropout or low completion rates have been a subject of interest to researchers and policy makers for a long time. According to the Poverty Status Report of 2005, the phenomenon of high dropout rates continues to pose a big challenge to the successful implementation of national policies. Save the Child Fund (2002) in their study of Child poverty in Uganda focused on school dropout and highlighted deep rooted culture, lack of investment in education, carrying out domestic chores and working to supplement family income as the major causes of dropout.

According to the Baseline Report of 2013 on Girl Education Challenge (GEC) carried out in Meru County, only 72% of primary school going children complete primary education, meaning that 28% of the pupils drop out before completion. No known study has been carried out on the causes of pupil' dropout in Imenti North Sub therefore, the researcher felt it was important to investigate the factors that influence pupils' dropout. This study, sought to determine the causes of pupils dropout in public primary schools in Imenti North Sub-County for the purpose of sensitizing education stakeholders on the causes and measures to curb the prevailing situation of dropout.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the causes of pupils' dropout in public primary schools in Imenti North Sub-County, Kenya.

### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

The study was guided by the following objectives.



- i. To investigate the influence of socio-economic factors on pupils' dropout in public primary schools in Imenti North Sub- County.
- ii. To establish the school-based factors that influence pupils' dropout in Imenti North Sub-County.
- iii. To determine the influence of pupil characteristics on pupils' dropout in Imenti North Sub-County.

### **1.5 Research Hypotheses**

The study sought to test the following hypotheses

*H<sub>01</sub>: There is no relationship between socio-economic factors and pupils' dropout in Imenti North Sub-County.*

*H<sub>02</sub>: School based factors have no significant influence on pupils' dropout in Imenti North Sub-County.*

*H<sub>03</sub>: Pupil characteristics have no significant influence on pupils' dropout in Imenti North Sub-County*

### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the causes of pupils' dropout in public primary schools. The findings of the study would have both theoretical and practical implications for the future primary school education in Kenya. Theoretically the findings of the study would contribute to the advancement of knowledge about the causes of dropout in primary schools, leading to the identification of determinants of low enrolment, hence, solving the problems of pupils' dropout.

Practically, the study is expected to sensitize primary school education policy makers on the causes of pupils' dropout in order to seek possible remedial measures for curbing the situation. It is also expected to raise awareness and concern among parents and stakeholders and in partnership they would solve the problem of dropout.

The findings of the study would be of help to the MoE to reduce education wastage, by suggesting corrective measures which the ministry would adopt. Educational policy makers, planners and donors such as the World Bank, UNESCO and UNICEF could be

challenged to look keenly on the causes of dropout. The study would also be a basis for further research in various dimensions such as causes of students' dropout in public day secondary schools considering that free day secondary school education is in place.

### **1.7 Limitations and Delimitations of the Study**

The study was carried exclusively in Imenti North Sub-County, where the schools were randomly sampled. Therefore, the findings might not be generalizable and applicable to other areas in Kenya, owing to the fact that different sub counties in the country have different factors that influence pupils' dropout. However, the results might be used in other areas as a guide or with caution.

The study was confined to 18 primary schools in Imenti North Sub-County due to high cost and the expansiveness of the area making the data collection prohibitive. The study sought the opinion from head teachers and teachers. It explored socio-economic factors, school based factors and pupils characteristics as the causes of dropout.

### **1.8 Assumptions of the Study**

The study was based on several assumptions. The researcher assumed that there were cases of school dropout in Imenti North Sub-County and that the respondents would provide accurate responses to the questions because the validity of questionnaire data depends on ability and willingness to give the information requested.

### **1.9 Organization of the Study**

This dissertation is structured as follows: the foregoing chapter one provides the research background, statement of the problem, research objectives, research hypotheses, significance of the study, limitations and delimitations of the study and organization of the study. Chapter two consists of theoretical review, literature review on the causes of dropout, knowledge gap, conceptual framework and operationalization of variables. Chapter three deals with methodology employed in the study as follows: research design, location of the study, target

population, sampling technique and sample size, data collection instrument, data collection procedures, data analysis and logistical and ethical considerations to be followed. The study findings and their interpretations are presented in chapter four, while chapter five has discussions, conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further research.

## **CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter reviews pertinent literature on the causes of dropout in public primary schools. The causes of dropout to be explored in this study include socio-economic factors, school based factors and pupil characteristics.

### **2.2 Theoretical Review**

This study is based on Charles Darwins (1882) Classical Liberal Theory of Equal opportunity and socio Darwinism. The theory asserts that each person is born with a given amount of capacity, which to a large extent is inherent and cannot be substantially changed. Therefore, the education system should be designed so as to remove barriers of any nature such as economic, cultural, gender or geographical, in order to fully utilize their capacity. Orodho, (2004) cites liberal activists such as Horance Mann (1952), who termed education as “the great equalizer” Instrument which would enhance life chances.

The theory demands for further going through education at primary and secondary levels to which access would be determined on the basis of individual merit and not on social backgrounds. This way, education would at least provide equality of economic opportunities

whereby all classes, races and sexes could equally benefit economically from excellent academic performance. The theory further states that social mobility can be promoted by equal opportunities in education.

The roots of this theory can be traced to writers such as Rousseau (1712–1778) who claimed that “natural statesmen were born equal and personal inequalities should not jeopardize social equity so long as society rewards people according to this status” (Orodho, 2004).

The classical liberal theory is relevant for this study because education should be accessed by all regardless of their social, economic and cultural differences. It is against this background that this study sought to investigate the factors underlying pupils’ dropout in public primary schools in Imenti North Sub-County.

### **2.3 Empirical Review**

The major concern of basic education is ensuring that children stay in school until they complete their level of education. Students who withdraw from school prematurely end up not obtaining any certificate of graduation (Ajaja, 2012). The major costs of dropping out of school include reduced political participation, increased demand for social services, increased crime rates and poor levels of health (Azzam, 2007). Individual costs include lower earnings, unemployment prospects and great likelihood of health problems (Thurton *et al*, 2006). It is clear from the foregoing that by dropping out of school, most students severely limits their chances of economic and social well being in future.

In this regard, a UNESCO Report of (2002) on the state of the World’s Children, points out that about 130 million children in developing world are denied their right to education through dropping out. The problem of dropping out should therefore be a concern of every member of the society since it has negative consequences at both individual and social levels (Maton and Moore, 2010). Thus, dropout phenomenon is not a mere problem that affects or impacts on individuals but it is a problem that affects the entire community as

it has been noticed that certain dropouts get involved in crime (Jamil *et al*, 2010). A study of this nature is pertinent and crucial as it is meant to raise awareness concerning school dropout in primary schools and hence, stimulate enactment of social policies that will help keep children in school.

### **2.3.1 Influence of Socio-economic Factors on Dropout**

In determining whether children enrol and remain in school, household income is found to be an important factor. This is because there are many costs associated with schooling and education process, ranging from school development levies, uniform and the opportunity costs of sending a child to school. Household income is linked to a range of factors such as when children start school, how often do they attend, whether they have to temporarily withdraw and eventually dropout (Njeru and Orodho, 2003). The two writers consent that poverty is the critical factor that is responsible for low participation and dropout. High rates of poverty at household level have made poor households either not to enrol their children in primary schools or fail to sustain uninterrupted participation of those who are enrolled due to inability to meet various requirements.

Mingat (2002) established that in the richest households, 76% of their children attend school compared to 40% of the poorest households. This means that children from poor households have lower attendance than those from richer households. Pscharapoulos (1985), concur with Mingat (2002) that the level of the family income is one of the most powerful influences on primary school dropout in the developing countries. Onyango, (2002), showed that parental socio-economic background influences their children's participation in education. This is especially so for the developing countries where children of the poor families are not provided with adequate educational materials and most opt not to enrol in school. If enrolled, they are most likely to drop out of school than it is for children who are from better-off families.

Croft (2002) was of the opinion that household income is an important factor in determining access to education; this is because educating a child attracts some potential costs right from the registration of the pupils to completion. Most studies have shown the link between household income and pupils' dropout (UNESCO, 2005, Bruneforth, 2006 and Cardoso and Verner, 2007). Cardoso and Verner (2007), whilst describing exclusions rather than dropout pointed poverty as the most common primary contributory factor for school dropout. Macionis, *et al.* (2005) observed that formal schooling, especially learning that is not directly linked to work, is mostly available only to wealthy people.

While confirming the position of Macionis, *et al.*, (2005) Cardoso and Verner (2007) further noted that, when it is to do with schooling, all low-income countries have one trait in common: they ration their education according to social stratification, where children from rich homes attain the best schools while those from poor homes attend the worst schools. In most poor countries of Africa, less than half of all children ever get to school and for the world as a whole, just half of the children reach the secondary school. As a result, 15% of Latin Americans, 39% of Asians and 40% of Africans are illiterate. This assertion led to Hunter and May (2003) to call poverty a plausible explanation of school disruption.

In a study carried out in Tanzania on children's enrolment in school by Renzulli and Park (2000) the author observed that virtually all households responding said that the main barrier to sending and maintaining children in school was financial and their inability to pay. Further in the study of gifted dropouts by Renzulli and Park (2000), it was found out that the children they studied disliked school and felt disconnected from the groups in school. They further noted that those children were from lower income families and had parents who were not as likely to monitor their school activities, and the gifted that stayed in school were from high income families and had parents who were likely to monitor their school activities.

The perception that people have about schooling and the importance placed on it at all times, do shape interactions between schooling, household income and dropping out. Poor households tend to have lower demand for schooling than richer households. It is pertinent to

understand that whatever the benefits of schooling, the cost for them are more difficult to meet than it is the case for richer households. Cocough (2000) describes the link between wealth and schooling retention in more detail. He noted that children in rural areas, and those that are in poor homes, drop out of school earlier in greater numbers, and fail to make the transition to high school, compared to their peers in richer homes.

The study by Holmes (2003) found out that, overall females receive less education than males and they tend to dropout, or are withdrawn earlier for both economic and socio-cultural reasons. The study further argues that the opportunity cost of sending female children to school in rural areas, where girls are married quite early, is high because benefits of their schooling will not accrue to their parental household. Similarly, Kakuru (2003), Kasente (2004) explain how early marriages influence children's dropping out of school, especially as regards the girl child since it is perceived by parents that marrying off the girl is an escape route from poverty.

Findings with regard to the impact of parents' education on schooling of children show that the children of more educated parents are more likely to progress further through school. Holmes (2003) shows that this impact differs by gender, the education of the father increase the expected level of school retention of boys, and that of the mother enhances attainment of girls. Similarly, other studies by Behman *et al*, (1999) cited by Swada and Lokshin (2001) reported a consistently positive and significant coefficient of father's and mother's education at all levels of education. Children whose parents monitor and regulate their activities, provide emotional support, encourage independent decision making and are generally more involved in their schooling are less likely to drop out of school (Ubogu, 2004).

Taking into account the gender dimension on dropouts, UNESCO (2005) notes that girls are more likely to drop out of school than boys and that children whose mothers have not attained any level of education will most likely drop out of school. Ubogu (2004)

demonstrates that, communities can also influence dropout rates by providing employment opportunities during school.

While some researchers have found that work can contribute to a child dropping out when the child regularly works over 14 hours per week, (Mann, 1989). On the issue of family type, a lot of studies have been carried out. In their study, Olubadewo, and Ogwu (2005) found out that children spend 87% of their time out of school under the influence of parents. As a result parents have greater influence on the children and make most decisions for them.

In recent times, the changing nature of the family type affects children access to school. Due to this change in family type, Van Voorhis (2003) asserted that the number of single parents has increased to a total of 9.7 million in America, almost all headed by women. This is likely to be more in Africa and Kenya, in particular. Davis (1991) confirmed that significant adults in many children's lives are not their biological parents at all but surrogate parents such as grandparents, aunts, uncles, brothers, sisters and neighbours. Okobia (2003) observed that more than half of the children born today will spend at least part of their childhood years in one parent home.

According to Olubadewo and Ogwu (2005) one out of every six American families is a step family and about one in three children live with a step family. They added that these families are created when divorced parents remarry. Step families, step siblings, multiple set of grandparents, usually become a confusing array of relatives from old and new marriages; this has made communication and collaboration more difficult than ever and is a likely cause of school dropout.

Holmes (2003) further observed that the family deficit theory views the nuclear or two parents family as the ideal family structure and their parenting as being good for children. The theory sees the absence of the other parent as a deficit to the family since his/her services would be missed, thus, presenting a lot of challenge to the children and the other parent who may not be in a position to sustain the children in school.

Fernel (2010) stated that research attention on step-parenting has increased dramatically in the past as divorce and remarriage rates have escalated and remain high. It is



further observed that remarriage of a divorced parent creates a marriage of a spouse with children, and this leads to creation of step family which comes with numerous expenses, disruptions and tradition. Where the financial burden becomes too much, this may lead to children dropping out of school. Ekanem (2011) also noted that complex parent histories and multiple relationships make adjustment difficult in a step family: Mau and Bikos (2000) also observed that children of divorced parents are more likely to have academic problems like anxiety, depression, acting out and the exhibition of delinquent behaviours, hence, dropping out of school.

According to Mann (1989), cited in Ubogu (2004), large numbers of children in a family of limited income result in overcrowding in the home and this may in turn have a deleterious effect upon behaviour. Mann further adds that parents in overcrowded accommodation in poor tenements cannot protect or supervise their young children as they might wish. According to Olubadewo, and Ogwu (2005) a large family size is quite strongly associated with socio-economic disadvantages. The large family size limits the parental involvement in the academic welfare of each child. Thus it leads to low participation of the child in school activities and may eventually lead to dropout. It was therefore, imperative to conduct a study to find out whether the same applies to Imenti North Sub-County

### ***2.3.2 School Based Factors Influencing Dropout***

Issues considered under the school portfolio are teaching/learning resources, quality of teachers, and irrelevant, complex, rigid and congested curriculum. Stewart (2008) strongly contends that schools attended by learners have the sole responsibility and task of reducing dropout rates. In this regard Mbilinyi (2003) observed that lack of diversity in school curriculum predispose students into dropping out, while Wotherspoon (2004) underlines the influence of school-related factors that are central to dropping out problem, namely; policies and practices, student teacher relationships, the nature of school curriculum, resources and quality learning.

On the other hand Azzam (2007) stated that many dropouts would have attended schools that have poor facilities and inadequate resources, conditions that affect the performance of the children and ultimately their decision to leave school. It is absolutely clear from the above that the poor quality of education, and the schools themselves, act as depressants on the demand for education by children. Thus, if schools are to keep children in schools then there is need to pay particular attention to the quality of education the children get from such schools.

Contributing to the debate on school dropouts, Bridgeland *et al*, (2006) recommends that to help students stay in school, teaching and curricula should be improved to make school more relevant and engaging. There should also be connection between school and work, improved instructions and access to support struggling students, and ensure strong adult/child relationship within the school set up. There should be cordial relationship within the school and also communication between parent and school should be improved.

Govindaraju and Venkatesan (2010) found out that neglect by teachers, poor teaching, discrimination and punishment meted by teachers, as being among the students' centric reasons for dropping out of school in rural setting in India. Caring teachers have been shown by Croninger and Lee (2003), in a study in America, to be an important source of social capital for students, a positive relationship between students and teachers, both in and out of class reduces the probability of dropping out by nearly half. Such relationship is important particularly to children from disadvantaged backgrounds and those experiencing academic difficulties that are at a risk of dropping out.

Okobia (2003) observed that most students drop out of school because of conflicts with teachers and other students, as well as, demeaning teachers attitude. Contributing to this situation, Njeru and Orodho (2003) noted that factors internal to the school, such as disciplinary policies or conflicts with students or teachers might serve to push students out of school.

Qualities of teachers also influence dropout of pupil in school. In most of the Sub-Saharan African countries, a situation exists in which teachers are not adequately trained. In-service programmes are not well established and teachers also lack adequate motivation. As a result, they under-perform. The current policy in Kenya is that a primary school teacher should teach all the subjects in the primary school curriculum. However, the two years of teacher training is not adequate for teacher trainee to acquire mastery in subject content and skills of pedagogy in all the subjects. Teachers, on the other hand, are not innovative and creative, are not learner-friendly and do not use gender responsive approaches in teaching in order to motivate children to like school. Teachers have no interest in teaching; they are also harsh, dictatorial and self-centred. Learners, therefore, run away from school (FAWE, 2002).

The role of education in promoting the economic and social vitality of a country's citizens is widely recognized and much emphasis is placed on the importance of quality education as an economic investment that deters school dropout and prevents societal costs associated with school dropout (Rolnick and Grunewald, 2006). The education system should, therefore, ensure inculcation of a proper work ethic, and it is the duty of schools to develop job-related competencies in students so that they are motivated to pursue education, have confidence in education and, thus, stay in school. Cooper and Jordan (2003) have shown that lack of economic alternatives in the labour market, even when graduates complete schooling, is a strong factor that influences children to drop out of school in developing countries.

Hussain *et al* (2011) found out that in Pakistan some of the curriculum related factors that contribute towards high dropout rates are that the curriculum at primary school level is not in harmony with the needs and abilities of children. Students feel bored and not satisfied with the prescribed curriculum which forces them to leave school. Furthermore the prescribed curriculum at primary level does not fulfill the needs and expectations of the community. Therefore, children do not take interest in their education, hence, dropping out of

school, Mann (1989) quoted in Ghazi *et al*, (2011) further reinforces this by noting that lack of education programmes to meet the individual's vocational and intellectual needs, ultimately leads to dropout.

Research studies in Pakistan by Hussain *et al* (2011) have shown that lack of physical facilities is also one of the major reasons of students dropping out in Pakistan with respondents stating that inadequate provision of physical facilities in schools and poor standards of health and nutrition is one of the main causes of high dropout rate in Pakistan. Schools in rural areas of the country, especially remote rural areas, lack basic facilities of life such as good roads, education and health facilities, which causes students' dropout. The study also revealed that poor condition of school buildings was also a main reason for students leaving school, a finding consistent with that of (Din *et al*, 2011). Inadequate resources such as textbooks, desks and blackboards have been found to influence dropout (Molteno *et al*, 2000).

Orodho (2005) in his study on access and participation in secondary school education in Kenya found that physical facilities and instructional materials were quite crucial to students' learning. FPE has stretched facilities to the limit, classrooms are congested, desks are inadequate and so are textbooks. In most cases, textbooks, charts, maps and other teaching/learning materials are not adequate. The quality of the available materials is also low. In some cases the materials are not learner friendly as they are full of stereotyping and at times gender biased. This affects the quality of learning and at the same time discourages learning (Mbilinyi and Omari, 1998). Toilets are lacking in some schools and, where they exist, they are inadequate and in poor condition. This has badly affected girls, the physically challenged and young children.

Administrative factors also play a critical role in contributing to student dropout. Administrative factors such as policies on discipline, school uniform, school fees, as well as repetition, tend to act as push factors causing student to drop out. Children who do not afford school uniform or are financially indebted to their schools are either barred from classes or

expelled from school until the debts are settled. Similarly, those who cannot afford the prescribed school uniforms are excluded from classes. Most children thus feel the pinch of such policies due to their inability to raise the required fees and, at the same time, there is no support that schools render to such kind of children; hence, they are left with no option but to drop out of school.

Ubogu (2004) identified school related factors such as poor administration, high cost of education as well as harsh school rules and regulations, as the causes of dropout among students. The function of a school is to educate, rehabilitate, as well as, to inculcate the right knowledge, skills and attitude; therefore, if the teacher's attitude towards the pupils is negative (for example, if pupils are punished arbitrarily, scolded or even labeled as useless,) such pupils may develop negative attitude towards school and, hence, dropout. Under such circumstances, the school personnel can be said to have failed in their function of provision of education. The study investigated whether the school dynamics discussed above were true of Imenti North Sub-County.

### ***2.3.3 Pupils Characteristics Influencing Dropout***

UNESCO (1997) cites the following as some of the pupil characteristics influencing dropout: academic failure, insufficient marks to advance to the next level of instruction, age, absenteeism and lack of local educational opportunities. In Kenya, where performance in national examinations has rendered the education system examination oriented, repetition, especially at primary school level, is rampant. This prolongs the learner's stay in school without necessarily increasing significantly the level of school achievement on the amount learnt by the repeaters. Consequently, the ages of pupils in all classes is affected.

Theuri (2004) noted that 58.3% of pupils in all classes surveyed had abnormal age due to repetition, a phenomenon which he linked to dropout. He further noted that repetition has negative psychological effects on pupils because it tends to lower pupil's self-esteem and damage peer relations. Hence, repetition has been cited as a major cause of school dropout,

thus refuting the views of its proponents who see it as an appropriate investment in pupil recovery since it is argued that children do not acquire knowledge and skills at the same rate.

Poor performance in examinations is a factor that contributes to school dropout. Poor performance is caused by inadequacy of school resources, negative attitude of students towards learning, inability of teachers to recognize student's individual differences and they therefore, give equal attention to all students, large classes unmanageable by teachers among others. A youth transition survey of 2002 revealed that dropouts achieve lower grades than those who completed school, notably in their capacity to understand, use and analyze written texts. Reading and writing is necessary for learning in all subjects including mathematics.

Difficulty in reading and writing is likely to impact negatively in overall performance of children. Ajaja (2012) noted that students who fail examinations at the end of the year, or leave without completing the course are mostly unstable extroverts. Thus, high intelligence quotient (IQ) is a necessary condition for academic success though not sufficient. Teachers and parents assume that children with low I.Q are a problem to teach but what such children need is more attention and more time to prevent them from dropping out. Continuous failure and repetition makes students frustrated and they finally opt to drop out of school.

Bruneforth (2006) noted that people with bad behaviour influence others because people like associating with their peers; they copy either good or bad behaviour. At the adolescence stage, students listen to their peers more than to anybody else. Adolescence is a period of life during which individuals develop their personality and refine their interests. At this time, the children are susceptible to negative influences, as well as to the models and images all around them. Therefore, having friends who are motivated to stay in school may determine the attitude of an individual towards education.

The youth in transition survey (2002) sheds a revealing light to this reality. It was found that some 65% of dropouts surveyed said that their friends believed it was important to finish high school. The proportion rises to 86% among continuing and high school graduates.

On the other hand, 50% of dropouts had a friend who was a dropout, compared to only 20% among those who were still in school and those who had completed.

During the adolescent age, children develop a feeling of independence and a sense of assertion which leads to anxiety and restlessness, which culminates to indiscipline. At this stage they want to be left alone and explore the world, but there are school rules to be adhered to and breaking these rules leads to conflict and indiscipline, making students to be suspended or expelled from school. Schools, on the other hand, do not have qualified staff to handle pupils carefully during the adolescent stage; hence, they feel neglected and abscond from school (Fernel (2010).

In the study of causes of dropout among girls in secondary schools, Stewart (2008) established that 72% of dropout cases were due to indiscipline. Lack of guidance and counselling in school accelerates the rate of school dropout.

A study carried out by Mbilinyi (2003) revealed that girls expressed the need for female teachers, who were scarce in their schools, so that they could confide in them when they had problems. They revealed that they had not been guided by either the parents or by the teachers to deal with changes in their bodies and, therefore, they become victims of dropout before completion.

According to the report of the commission of inquiry into education system, also known as TIQET (Totally Integrated Quality Education and Training), HIV/AIDS was recognized as a serious issue. The government and NGOS are all working together to control the epidemic. HIV/AIDS is turning into a socio-economic disaster, especially in the Sub-Saharan Africa. The high and growing rates of infection and death from HIV/AIDS related diseases have made it an epidemic of international magnitude. The epidemic has affected all sectors of our economy.

As highlighted in TIQET we find that the loss of earning capacity caused by HIV/AIDS makes it difficult for the infected and affected parents, or guardians, to support education and training programmes of their children, hence, slowing down the growth of the school age population, this has lowered enrolment in primary schools. Therefore, dropout

rates have been accelerated by effects originating from the deadly disease (Kasonde, 1999). This study, therefore, wished to find out effects of pupils characteristics on dropout in primary schools.

#### **2.4 Knowledge Gap**

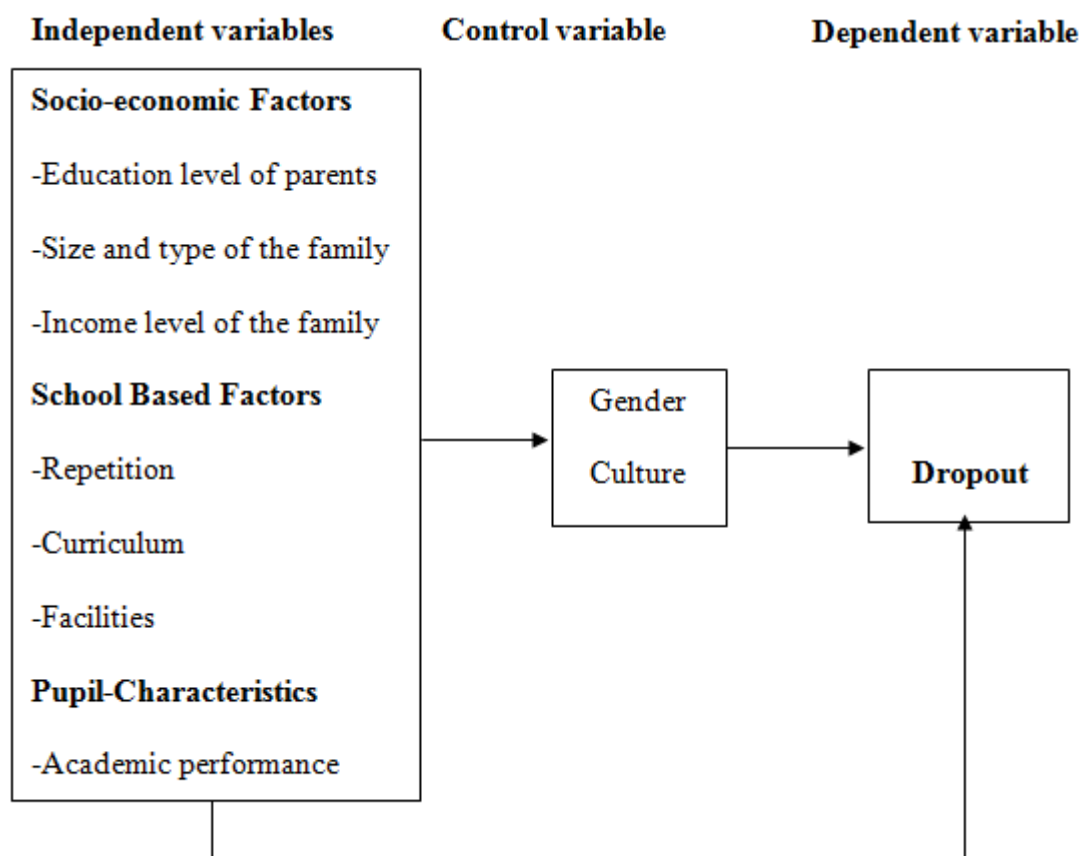
After the introduction of Free Primary Education (FPE) in 2003, there has been a lot of distinguished researches on the challenges facing effective implementation of free primary education in public primary schools. Dropout, in relation to various geographical locations has been researched on frequently and insightfully. However, the causes of pupils' dropout in public primary schools have had very little attention. This study strived to bridge the knowledge gap and provided insight on the causes of pupils' dropout in public primary schools in Imenti North Sub-County, Meru County.

#### **2.5 Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework shows socio-economic factors, school based factors, and pupil characteristics that influence dropout of pupils in Imenti North Sub-County.

**FIGURE 1**  
**Conceptual Frameworks on Variables in the Study**





**Source: Author (2015)**

The study was based on a conceptual model developed by the researcher so as to help identify the answers to the questions in the study. The dependent variable for the study was dropout, while the independent variables were; socio-economic factors, school based factors and pupil characteristics. The control variables, which according to Kothari (2004) are independent variables that are not related to the purpose of the study but could have an effect on the dependent variable included culture and gender. For the purpose of this study the researcher assumed that the control variables were insignificant. Figure 1 shows the relationship between the independent variables (including control variables) and the dependent variable.

## 2.6 Operationalization of Variables

The study variables were operationalized as per table 1 below.

**TABLE 1**  
**Operationalization of variables**

Variable	Indicator /operationalization	Measurement scale	Question in Questionnaire
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<b>Dependent</b>	Dropout	Retention	Interval	Q 5-7 Q 12
<b>Independent</b>	Socio-economic factors	Absenteeism	Interval	Q 8 & 9
	School based factors and pupils characteristics	Unconducive learning environment Low self-esteem	Ordinal	Q 10 & 11

*Source: Author (2015)*

## **CHAPTER THREE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter is a blueprint of the methodology that was used by the researcher to find answers to the research questions. In this chapter, the research methodology was presented in the following order, research design, location of the study, target population, sampling technique and sample size, data collection instruments, data collection procedures and data analysis. Logistical and ethical considerations that guided the study were also outlined.

### **3.2 Research Design**

Dooley (2007) defines a research design as the scheme, outline or plan that is used to generate answers to research problems. Further, Donald (2006) notes that a research design is the structure of the research, it is the 'glue' that holds all the elements in a research project together.

For the purpose of this study the researcher made use of the descriptive survey design utilizing quantitative approach. Descriptive survey research design is used in preliminary and exploratory studies to allow researchers to gather information, summarize, present and interpret for the purpose of clarification (Orodho, 2002). Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) on the other hand, gave the purpose of descriptive research as determining and reporting the way things are. Descriptive survey is also intended to produce statistical information about aspects of education (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). The design was deemed suitable since it helped the researcher to describe the state of study variables even if changes would have taken place without manipulation by the researcher.

### **3.3 Location of the Study**

The study was carried out in primary schools in Imenti North Sub-County, Meru County, Kenya. Imenti North Sub-County is in Meru County and borders Imenti Central, Buuri, Tigania East and Tigania West Sub-Counties. The education office of the Sub-County is located within Meru Town. There are three (3) education zones in the Sub-County, namely: Municipality, Miriga Mieru East and Ntima. The Sub-County has 59 public primary schools, 19,433 pupils and 671 teachers.

The selection of Imenti North Sub- County was prompted by the researcher's professional interest to conduct research in the area based on familiarity and easy accessibility of the schools within the sub-county. The researcher is a teacher in the area and according to a Baseline Report of 2013 on Girl Education Challenge (GEC) carried out in Meru County, only 72% of primary school going children complete primary education, meaning that 28% of the pupils drop out before completion of primary education. Singleton (1993) observes that the ideal setting for any study is one where the researcher has interest in, one that is easily accessible and one that allows the researcher immediate rapport with the respondents. Thus the Sub-County was selected because it was within reach by the researcher.

### **3.4 Target Population**

Target population in statistics is the specific population about which information is derived. According to Ngechu (2004), a population is a well defined set of people, services, elements, events, groups of things or households that are being investigated. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) explain that the target population should have some observable characteristics, to which the researcher intends to generalize the results of the study. The target population for this study consisted of all 59 head teachers and 671 teachers from the 59 public primary schools in Imenti North Sub-county.

### **3.5 Sampling Technique and Sample Size**

Sampling means selecting a given number of subjects from a defined population as a representative of that population. Any statement made about the sample should be true of the population (Orodho, 2002). It is however, agreed that the larger the sample, the smaller the sampling error.

The researcher used all the education zones of Imenti North Sub-County. These included Miriga Mieru, East, Ntima and Municipality. Due to resource constraints, it was not possible to study all the fifty nine (59) public primary schools in Imenti North Sub-County. The target and accessible population constituted of head teachers and teachers. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) suggest that 10 to 30 percent of accessible population would be enough for descriptive survey.

The researcher used random sampling to identify 18 schools from the 59 schools in North Imenti Sub County, which represented 30 percent of the total population. Head teachers from the sampled schools were involved in the study as they are in charge of education, administrative duties and provision of resources. To determine the number of teachers who participated in the study, Kathuri and Pals (1993) recommended that a sample size of 100 respondents is appropriate for survey research. Therefore, the researcher used simple random sampling to select 6 teachers from each sampled school, making a total of 108

teachers. Guidance and counseling teachers were purposively sampled. This was because teachers have close relationships with the pupils, which enabled them to respond to the questionnaire.

### **3.6 Data Collection Instrument, Reliability and Instrumentation**

According to Ngechu (2004) there are many methods of data collection. The choice of instrument depends mainly on the attributes of the subjects, research topic, objectives, design, expected data and results. This is because each instrument collects specific type of data.

This study used questionnaires to collect data from head teachers and teachers.

Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) define a questionnaire as a written set of questions to which the subject responds in writing. They further state that questionnaires are cheap to administer to respondents who are scattered over a large area. They are also convenient for collecting information from a large population within a short span of time.

#### **3.6.1 Validity of Research Instrument**

Validity indicates the degree to which an instrument measures what it is supposed to measure (Kothari, 2004) or the degree with which results obtained from the analysis of the data actually represent the phenomena under study (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). All assessment of validity are subjective opinions based on the judgment of the researcher (Wiersma, 1995).

Pilot study was conducted in two schools to help improve the face validity of the instruments.

According to Borg and Gall (1989) content validity of an instrument is improved through expert judgments. As such, the researcher sought assistance of the lecturers and the supervisor in order to ascertain the validity of the instruments. In addition, all the instrument items were based on the research objectives. Results obtained from the pilot study were used to clear any ambiguities in the instruments.

#### **3.6.2 Reliability of Research Instrument**

Reliability is a measure of the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results after repeated trials (Nsubuga, 2000). The researcher used the test re-test technique to test for

reliability. The researcher administered the research instruments twice in two pilot schools. The researcher administered the instruments to the respondents in the two schools and collected the filled questionnaire. The researcher waited for two weeks and administered the same instruments to the same group of respondents again.

After the pilot study, the researcher calculated the reliability of the head teachers' and teachers' questionnaires using the two sets of tests. A correlation coefficient of 0.723 for head teachers' questionnaire and 0.718 for teachers' questionnaire was obtained. According to Gay (1992) a coefficient correlation of 0.7 and above is recommended as indicating that an instrument is reliable, this coefficient lies within this range. Therefore the instruments were considered to be reliable.

### **3.7 Data Collection Procedures**

The researcher obtained an approval letter from KCA University, which was taken to the head teachers of the respective schools. The selected schools were visited and the researcher personally administered the questionnaires to the teachers and head teachers. According to Bryman and Bell (2003), a self administered questionnaire is the only way to elicit self report on people's opinion, attitudes, beliefs and values. The filled questionnaires were collected on an appropriate day.

### **3.8 Data Analysis**

Data analysis in descriptive survey studies involves a variety of descriptive and inferential statistics. After all the data was collected, it was cleaned up, organized, coded and entered into the computer for analysis using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). The purpose for coding was to classify the responses into meaningful categories so as to bring out the essential patterns. Data was analyzed using quantitative methods. Frequency distributions and percentages were generated using descriptive statistics in order to examine the pattern of the responses.

The Pearson's coefficient of correlation was applied to measure the degree of influence of each independent variable on the dependent variable. Pearson r was used in this study since the data was measured in the interval scale and Pearson's correlation coefficient technique is recommended for such data as being the most appropriate for determining relationships (Kothari, 2004).

The assumption associated with the application of Pearson is that the relationship between the variables being correlated is linear. This assumption was tested on the data by first plotting a scatter graph to check on the linear relationship of the variables. The correlation was based on two-tailed tests in order to allow for the possibility that the influence of independent variables on the dependent variable could assume a positive or a negative direction.

To test hypothesis, simple linear regression models were used to test significance between each independent and dependent variable. Significance of variables in each model was tested using P-values. The three hypotheses were tested using the linear regression with ANOVA being used to test the statistical significance of the independent variables to the dependent variable. The significance level for hypotheses testing was set at 0.05. The findings were presented in form of tables, frequencies, and percentages. Result from the analysis was used to draw conclusions and make recommendations on the factors influencing dropout in public primary schools in Imenti North Sub-County.

### **3.9 Logistical and Ethical Considerations**

Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) argue that ethical considerations such as confidentiality, anonymity and avoidance of deception are very important issues in social research. For the purpose of this study, permission was first sought from relevant authorities and a letter granted to allow the researcher to carry out the research. Furthermore, the researcher explained the purpose of the study to the respondents and assured them of confidentiality of their responses and identities.

Sauders, Lewis and Thornhil (2003), define research ethics as the appropriateness of the researcher's behaviour in relation to the rights of those who become subjects of the research project, or who are affected by it. The researcher adhered to appropriate behaviour in relation to the rights of the head teachers and teachers, who were the respondents. The respondents were allowed to give consent to participate and were asked not to write their names or that of their school on the questionnaire.



## **CHAPTER FOUR DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter entails the analysis, presentation, and the interpretation of findings. The chapter is divided into subsections. The first section presents the analysis and presentation of general characteristics of the respondents such as age, gender and level of education among others. In the second section, the data analyzed around key variables as relates to the causes of pupils' dropout in public primary schools in Imenti North Sub-County.

### **4.2 Analysis of Response Rate and Respondents Characteristics**

This section gives findings around general socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. The characteristics include age, gender, educational background and experience. Responses were got from head teachers and teachers from public primary schools in Imenti North Sub County. Out of the 108 teachers to whom questionnaires distributed, 106 were responded to and accepted for analysis representing a response rate of 98.15% which is statistically acceptable. For head teachers, all the questionnaires (100%) were responded to, thus very acceptable for statistical analysis.

#### ***4.2.1 Age Distribution of Respondents***

The demographic attribute of age has importance through linkage with personal experiences. Age may influence attitudes and perceptions that can substantially be different across cohorts of age dissimilarity. Table 2 shows the age distribution of the respondents.

**TABLE 2**  
**Age Distribution of Respondents**

Age	Head teacher		Teacher	
	F	%	F	%
20 – 30 Years	0	0.0	32	30.2
31 – 40 Years	4	22.2	50	47.2
41 – 50 Years	1	5.6	16	15.1
51 – 60 Years	13	72.2	8	7.5
Total	18	100	106	100

**Source: Author (2015)**

Table 2 shows that majority of the head teachers (72.2%) were aged between 51 and 60 years. From the table, 5.6% of the school heads were aged 41 to 50 years. Those aged between 31-40 years were 22.2% while there was no one among the head teachers aged below 30 years. This finding demonstrates that young people are not fully represented in key managerial and leadership functions. Majority of the teachers were (77.4%) were between 20 and 40 years.

#### **4.2.2 Gender distribution of respondents**

The study sought to establish how the sample was distributed by gender. The results of the respondents are presented in Table 3.

**TABLE 3**  
**Gender distribution of the respondents**

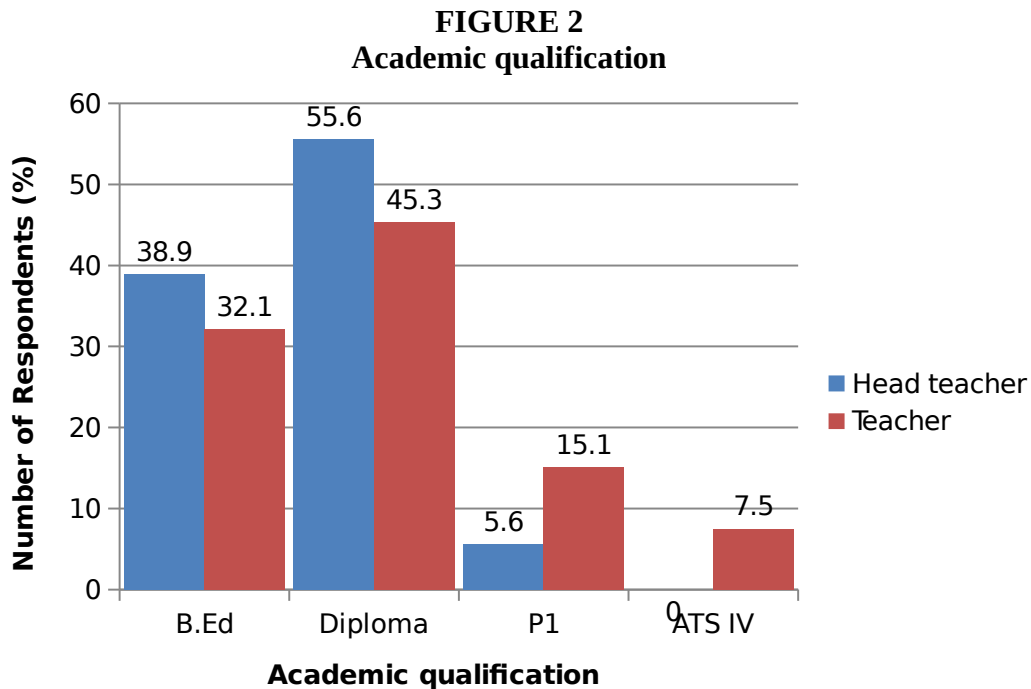
Gender	Head teacher		Teacher	
	F	%	F	%
Male	7	38.9	24	22.6
Female	11	61.1	82	77.4
Total	18	100	106	100

**Source: Author (2015)**

Findings from Table 3 indicate that there were slightly more female teachers and female head teachers than men. The newly promulgated Kenya constitution (2010) gives women more opportunities to participate effectively in decision making nationally and in the devolved governance structures. From the Table, 22.6% of the teachers were males while 77.4% were females. This finding indicates generally that the teaching profession seems to be more attractive to women in both teaching and management.

### 4.2.3 Academic qualification

The study sought to establish the academic qualifications of head teachers and teachers with the aim of determining their level of teaching competency. Figure 2 presents the results of the finding.



*Source: Author (2015)*

Findings in Figure 2 show that 38.9% of the head teachers and 32.1% of the teachers had bachelors degrees. The figure also shows that 55.6% of the head teachers had diplomas while 45.3% of the teachers had diplomas. Figure 2 also shows that 5.6 percent of the head teachers had P1 certificates while 15.1% of the teachers had P1 certificates. In primary schools, the minimum academic qualification for head teachers and teachers is a P1 certificate and all of them had attained this. This indicates that teachers were well qualified, which could contribute to better academic performance of pupils and subsequently, encourage pupils to remain in schools, hence, reducing dropouts.

### 4.2.4 Distribution of respondents by experience

The length of time spent in any institution leads to the development, understanding and experiences of the factors contributing to students' dropout. The study sought to establish the

length of service of head teachers and teachers with the aim of establishing variances in factors contributing to dropout rates in primary schools in Imenti North sub County. Table 4 below shows the findings.

**TABLE 4**  
**Experience of the respondents**

Experience	Head teacher		Teachers	
	Frequen cy	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
0 – 2 Years	2	11.1	64	60.4
3 – 4 years	8	44.4	26	24.5
5 – 6 Years	0	0.0	0	0.00
Over 6 Years	8	44.4	16	15.1
Total	18	100	106	100.0

*Source: Author (2015)*

From table 4, majority (55.5%) of the respondents had been head teachers for at least four years and below. However a sizeable number (44.4%) of them had been heads of schools for 6 years. This depicts the experience that these heads had. Total experience and managerial experience in serving the school have a positive effect on heads' competency in managerial skills. It is argued that more experienced school heads lead their institutions much better as compared to their less experienced counterparts, consequently, better students' academic achievement. In this study, it was found that majority of the heads had inadequate experience (less than 4 years) and this could influence the academic performance of the pupils and consequently drop out from school.

#### **4.2.5 Enrolment and dropout rate of pupils**

The study sought to determine the number of pupils who dropped out of school in the last five years from the year 2010 to the year 2014. Table 5 presents the findings.

**TABLE 5**  
**School dropout rates in Imenti North Sub County**

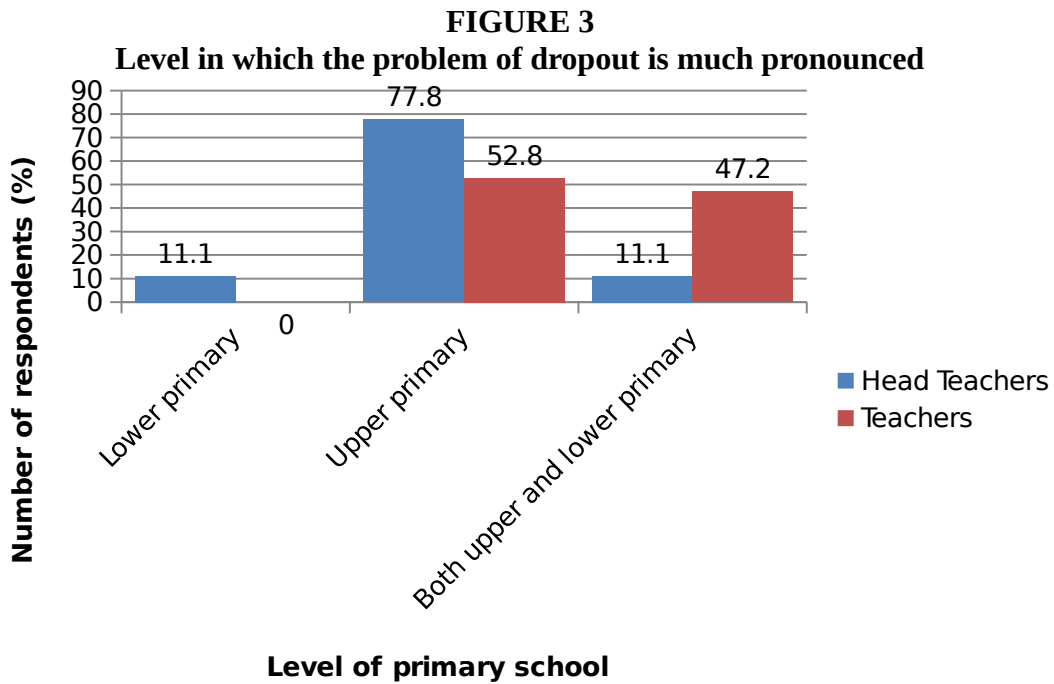
Dropout Rates		Min	Max	Mean	SD
Year	Gender				
2010	M	.00	7.00	3.7647	1.78639
	F	.00	8.00	3.4706	2.18282

2011	M	1.00	4.00	2.1765	1.07444
	F	1.00	7.00	3.2353	1.71499
2012	M	.00	10.00	3.2353	2.46296
	F	.00	3.00	1.5294	.87447
2013	M	.00	3.00	1.5294	1.12459
	F	.00	5.00	1.8235	1.66716
2014	M	.00	5.00	1.4706	1.28051
	F	.00	4.00	2.2941	1.53153
<b>Average Dropout Rate</b>		<b>.80</b>	<b>3.90</b>	<b>2.4529</b>	<b>.79696</b>

**Source: Author (2015)**

Findings in Table 5 show that the average dropout rate for any single gender be it boys or girls was 2.45. This implies that in the sub county, there were approximately 2 boys or 2 girls dropping out of school each year. In this country a lot of money is spent by the government in providing free primary education though it appears that a part of this expenditure is spent on those who drop out of school. This is wastage of the scarce national resources because the dropouts do not only undermine the goals of education but also hamper the growth and development of the children.

Respondents were requested to indicate the level of primary school where dropout was much pronounced. Figure 3 shows the findings.



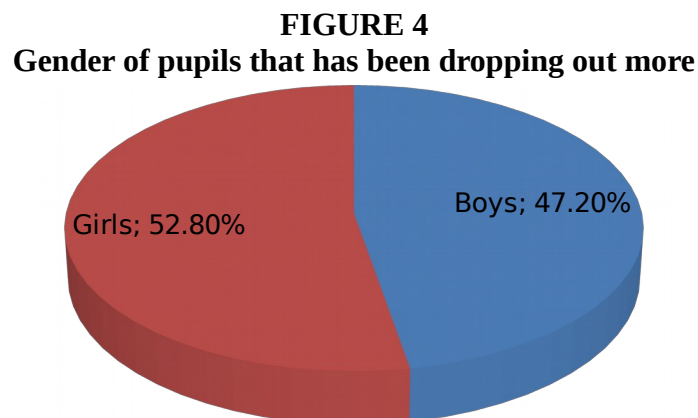
**Source: Author (2015)**

Findings in Figure 3 show that majority of the head teachers (77.8%) and teachers (52.8%) were of the opinion that dropout was so pronounced in the upper primary level of educations as compared to the lower primary.

#### **4.2.6 Gender of pupils that has been dropping out more**

Respondents were requested to indicate gender of pupils who dropped out of school the most.

Figure 4 presents the findings.



**Source: Author (2015)**

According to figure 4 either gender was affected in equal measure by the dropout rates. From the figure, 52.8% of the teachers were of the opinion that girls were the most

affected gender and 47.2% indicated that the boys were the most affected gender. This finding suggests that drop out was a problem that affected the boys just as equally as the girls.

### **4.3 Inferential Analysis**

This section provides findings around the core study variables giving detailed explanation and interpretation of the study findings. The study hypotheses are also tested and findings presented.

#### **4.3.1 Socio -Economic Factors Influencing Pupils' Dropout**

Respondents were required to respond to given selected suggested socio-economic factors that were believed to contribute to dropout in primary schools.

The information was analysed by determining the mean on five items on a 5 – point Likert scale where: Strongly agree = 5; Agree= 4, Neutral = 3; Disagree = 2; Strongly disagree =1. However, the ranges of mean scores were interpreted as follows: Strongly agree = 4.2 – 5.0; Agree = 3.4 -.4.2; Neutral = 2.6 -3.4; Disagree = 1.8 -2.6; Strongly Disagree 1.0 – 1.8. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 6 and 7.

**TABLE 6**  
**Socio economic factors influencing pupils' dropout (Head teachers' responses)**

Socio-economic Factors	Level of agreement										M
	SA		A		N		D		SD		
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Children from poor families drop out of school more than children who are from better off families.	7	38.9	10	55.6	1	5.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	<b>4.33</b>
Children often drop out of school for wage labour in order to supplement the family income.	3	16.7	10	55.6	3	16.7	2	11.1	0	0.0	<b>3.78</b>
The family size has an impact on primary school dropout.	1	5.6	8	44.4	7	38.9	2	11.1	0	0.0	<b>3.44</b>
Parent with high level of education send their children to school more than those with low education level.	10	55.6	6	33.3	1	5.6	1	5.6	0	0.0	<b>4.39</b>
With the introduction of FPE, financial status of households does not influence pupils' dropout in public primary schools.	1	5.6	1	5.6	8	44.4	2	11.1	6	33.3	<b>2.39</b>
Though the user charges have been abolished in primary schools, there are other "hidden costs" hindering retention of pupils in public primary schools.	9	50.0	7	38.9	0	0.0	2	11.1	0	0.0	<b>4.28</b>

**Source: Author (2015)**

Findings in Table 6 show that majority of the head teachers strongly agreed that children from poor families drop out of school more than children who are from better off families (M=4.33), that parents with high levels of education send their children to school more than those with low education level (M=4.39) and that though the user charges have been abolished in primary schools, there are other "hidden costs" hindering retention of pupils in public primary schools (M=4.28).



These results imply that poverty, parents' education level and fee charges were among the major contributors to dropout in primary schools in Imenti North Sub County. Today, growing up in a rural region in Kenya often means growing up without a decent education. Rural people are often caught in the vicious cycle of having no access to the services and opportunities that might lift them out of poverty – education, gainful employment, adequate nutrition, infrastructure and communications. Poverty is the source of poor health.

Although some schools have a feeding program in place, only one meal is given which might be the only meal of the day for some learners. Therefore, it's just not sufficient to feed all children properly. Many families in Africa cannot afford two square meals, let alone sending their children to good schools where they will acquire good and qualitative education. Education for rural people lies at the heart of rural development and this is fundamental for reducing poverty worldwide. The school is the most important institution outside the family involved in socializing young people into all dimensions of adult roles and responsibilities. More years of schooling have been associated with many positive outcomes, including later ages of marriage, lower fertility, and healthier and better educated children. Therefore, education level of the parents plays a great role in shaping the education and the future of their children.

The study findings also show that majority of the head teachers agreed that children often drop out of school for wage labour in order to supplement the family income (M=3.78) and that the family size had an impact on primary school dropout (M=3.44). Children could get involved in child labour as a result of poverty in the area that makes the pupils to look for employment to meet their basic needs. Imenti North being a coffee growing area, child labour has been on the rise in coffee farms, eventually preventing children from attending school consistently. Due to their involvement in these farms, children would in some occasions leave

school to go and pick coffee, thus further reducing their participation in educational activities.

The result of this is increased pupils dropout from school and poor academic performance.

The table also shows that head teachers neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement that with the introduction of FPE, financial status of households does not influence pupils' dropout in public primary schools (M=2.39). This implies that the head teachers were not sure whether introduction of FPE and financial status of households influenced dropout. Similar findings were observed from the teachers as shown in Table 7.

**TABLE 7**  
**Socio economic factors influencing pupils' dropout (Teachers' responses)**

Socio-economic Factors	Level of agreement										M
	SA		A		N		D		SD		
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Children from poor families drop out of school more than children who are from better off families.	74	69.8	24	22.6	8	7.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	<b>4.6</b> <b>2</b>
Children often drop out of school for wage labour in order to supplement the family income.	8	7.5	24	22.6	34	32.1	40	37.7	0	0.0	<b>3.0</b> <b>0</b>
The family size has an impact on primary school dropout.	32	30.2	40	37.7	18	17.0	16	15.1	0	0.0	<b>3.8</b> <b>3</b>
Parent with high level of education send their children to school more than those with low education level.	74	69.8	32	30.2	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	<b>4.7</b> <b>0</b>
With the introduction of FPE, financial status of households does not influence pupils' dropout in public primary schools.	0	0.0	24	22.6	16	15.1	48	45.3	18	17.0	<b>2.4</b> <b>3</b>
Though the user charges have been abolished in primary schools, there are other "hidden costs" hindering retention of pupils in public primary schools.	18	17.0	80	75.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	8	7.5	<b>3.9</b> <b>4</b>

**Source: Author (2015)**

Findings in Table 8 show that majority of the teachers strongly agreed that children from poor families drop out of school more than children who are from better off families (M=4.62), that parents with high level of education send their children to school more than those with low education level (M=4.70) These results imply that poverty, parents' education level were among the major contributors to dropout in primary schools in Imenti North Sub County.

The study findings also show that majority of the teachers agreed that though the user charges have been abolished in primary schools, there are other "hidden costs" hindering retention of pupils in public primary schools (M=3.94) and that the family size had an impact on primary school dropout (M=3.84). the table also shows that teachers were not very sure that children often drop out of school for wage labour in order to supplement the family income (M=3.00).

Therefore teachers neither agreed nor disagreed that children often drop out of school for wage labour in order to supplement the family income. The table also shows that teachers disagreed with the statement that with the introduction of FPE, financial status of households does not influence pupils' dropout in public primary schools (M=2.43). This implies that the teachers were categorical that introduction of FPE and financial status of households did not influence dropout. The respondents were further requested to give other socio-economic factors that could influence dropout in primary school in Imenti North Sub County. Table 8 presents the findings.

**TABLE 8**  
**Other socio economic factors influencing pupils' dropout (Head teachers' responses)**

<b>Other socio-economic factors</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Unstable family backgrounds	13	72.22
Death of one or both parents	8	44.44
Irresponsible parents	14	77.78
Poverty	16	88.89
Cultural Rituals	10	55.56
Drug and substance abuse	9	50.00

From Table 8, head teachers (88.89%) felt that poverty was a factor contributing to pupil drop-out from public primary schools. Cultural practices like early marriages and passage of rites (both male and female circumcision) contributed also to dropout as indicated by 55.56% of the head teachers. Cultural practices like early marriage inevitably denies children of school age their right to the education they need for their personal development, their preparation for adulthood, and their effective contribution to the future wellbeing of their families and society. Indeed, married girls who would like to continue schooling may be both practically and legally excluded from doing so.

The essence of the rights to education and to health is that they facilitate and ensure the effective enjoyment of other human rights. For a number of poorer families, the potential rewards of educating daughters are too far off and, therefore, their education is not recognized as an investment. Families perceive that a girl's education will only benefit her husband's household, and not her parents.

Additionally, some parents believe that girls do not need an education for their roles as wives and mothers, that education undermines cultural practices, and it teaches the girl to reject tradition. Some schools often have a policy of refusing to allow married or pregnant girls or girls with babies to return to school. They may believe that it will set a bad example to other pupils or that other parents will be angry to see the school go against the traditional beliefs.

Even if they do permit girls to return, the school environment - rules, school routine, time table and physical conditions – can make it too difficult for a girl to attend school and perform her duties as wife and mother at the same time. Bullying and abuse by pupils and other parents can further reduce girls' self-confidence and sense of security, forcing them to give up on schooling. When girls drop out of school to get married, there is a knock-on effect for the community as a whole, and for future generations. Studies suggests that children of young, uneducated mothers are less likely to have a good start to their education, do well in

class or continue beyond the minimum schooling. Their daughters especially are likely to dropout, marry young and begin the cycle again (Ingrid, 2009)

The study findings reveal that 44.44% of the head teachers felt that death of one or both parents has contributed to a greater extent to dropout from public primary schools. When parents die, the children themselves take on responsibilities for the survival of the family and home. In economically disadvantaged communities, a child's contribution is often necessary for the survival of the household. Death of parents may not simply increase the amount of work that the children do but may also assume decision-making and responsibilities that transform roles within families and households.

Children assume adult roles as heads of household because there are no alternatives. They take charge of the care and running of the home for themselves and their siblings. They work long hours doing household tasks, supervising younger children and engaging in income-generating work in order to support the family. Many quit school and jeopardize their own health and developmental needs to take on roles as parent and provider (Miriam, 2000).

From the Table, 77.78% of the head teachers felt that pupil's dropout was as a result of irresponsible parents. Some parents have been accused of lack of support in provision of resources for learning for their children and lack of co-operation in matters regarding their children education. In Kenya in the past, financial constraints have often discouraged many poor parents from sending some or all of their children to school. Often these parents keep their children gainfully employed to supplement the family income, or keep them at home to look after their younger siblings while both parents are away at work in the fields or elsewhere.

Drug abuse was another factor cited by the head teachers that contributed to pupils' dropout. Since drugs like miraa, local brews, alcohol are readily available in the area, 50% of the head teachers associated this with drug abuse among pupils, which was cited as another factor contributing to dropout. This together with children involvement in the picking of

coffee, which reduced time for studies, consequently increases chances of children absconding school.

According to Monti *et al* (2005), substance use itself may impair cognitive development which, in turn, reduces academic achievement and disrupts academic progression. Monti *et al* (2005) argues that heavy adolescent substance use can lead to problems with working memory and attention due to changes in adolescent brain activity. In turn, these memory and attention problems may lead to decreases in academic performance and engagement in school, and ultimately increase risk for school problems and dropout.

Head teachers 72.22% felt that unstable family backgrounds contribute to dropout among pupils. Theoretically, the family is a source of security for all members who belong to that family unit. It is the site of social reproduction as children are born and are socialized within the family. The family provides the individual with a safety net and a buffer against outside pressures. The family provides the individual with a sense of security. When the family for any reason stops functioning then the individuals who belong to that particular family unit become generally insecure. One of the common factors that can help to explain why some children from poor families end up dropping out of school was family breakdown or violence within the family. In some cases of violence within the home, especially in cases where the parents fight all the time, some children might prefer to stay at home to monitor the situation and protect one parent from the other parent.

#### ***4.3.2 School Based Factors Influencing Pupils' Dropout***

Respondents were required to respond to given selected suggested school based factors that were believed to contribute to dropouts in primary schools. The information was analysed by determining the mean on five items on a 5 – point Likert scale where: Very great extent = 5; Great extent = 4, Moderate extent = 3; Low extent = 2; Not at all =1. However, the ranges of mean scores were interpreted as follows: Very great extent = 4.2 – 5.0; Great extent = 3.4

-4.2; Moderate extent = 2.6 -3.4; Low extent = 1.8 -2.6; Not at all 1.0 – 1.8. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 9.

**TABLE 9**  
**School based factors influencing pupils’ dropout (Head teachers responses)**

School Based Factors	Level of agreement										M
	VGE		GE		ME		LE		NAA		
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
School punishment	0	0.0	3	16.7	5	27.8	3	16.7	7	38.9	<b>2.22</b>
Class repetition	0	0.0	6	33.3	6	33.3	4	22.2	2	11.1	<b>2.89</b>
Quality of education	0	0.0	5	27.8	4	22.2	2	11.1	7	38.9	<b>2.39</b>
Shortage of teachers	5	27.5	3	16.7	2	11.1	3	16.7	5	27.8	<b>3.00</b>
Inadequate physical facilities	6	33.3	1	5.6	4	22.2	4	22.2	3	16.7	<b>3.17</b>
Inadequate teaching and learning resources	0	0.0	7	38.9	2	11.1	3	16.7	6	33.3	<b>2.56</b>
Poor sanitation	0	0.0	4	22.2	4	22.2	6	33.3	4	22.2	<b>2.44</b>
Negative attitude of teachers	0	0.0	8	44.4	3	16.7	4	22.2	3	16.7	<b>2.89</b>

**Source: Author (2015)**

Findings in Table 9 reveal that majority of the head teachers indicated that class repetition influenced dropout to moderate extent (M=2.89), that shortage of teachers influenced dropout to a moderate extent (M=3.00), that inadequate physical facilities such as classrooms influenced dropout to moderate extent (M=3.17) and that negative attitude of teachers influenced dropout to moderate extent (M=2.89).

An additional requisite for meaningful teaching and learning to happen is infrastructure and teaching learning materials. Availability of physical facilities such as classrooms, toilets, desks, water tanks and food is important in retaining children at school and therefore in the case that these facilities are not adequately provided then pupils can drop out of school. Hygienic conditions need to be maintained in schools for proper learning to occur. There is a critical shortage of learning materials, which constrains offering quality education and this can contribute to dropout.



From the table, majority of the head teachers were of the opinion that school punishment (M=2.22), quality of education (M=2.39), inadequate teaching and learning resources (M=2.56) and poor sanitation (M=2.44) all contributed to low extent to the pupils' dropout in Imenti North Sub County. Teachers gave similar responses as shown in table 10.

**TABLE 10**  
**School based factors influencing pupils' dropout (Teachers' responses)**

School Based Factors	Level of agreement										M
	VGE		GE		ME		LE		NAA		
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
School punishment	0	0.0	8	7.5	34	32.1	40	37.7	24	22.6	<b>2.25</b>
Class repetition	30	30.2	24	22.6	0	0.0	34	32.1	16	15.1	<b>3.11</b>
Quality of education	0	0.0	8	7.5	8	7.5	34	32.1	56	52.8	<b>1.70</b>
Shortage of teachers	8	7.5	26	24.5	0	0.0	32	30.2	40	37.7	<b>2.34</b>
Inadequate physical facilities	26	24.5	24	22.6	8	7.5	16	15.1	32	30.2	<b>2.96</b>
Inadequate teaching and learning resources	0	0.0	8	7.5	18	17.0	32	30.2	48	45.3	<b>1.87</b>
Poor sanitation	0	0.0	0	0.0	8	7.5	58	54.7	40	37.7	<b>1.70</b>
Negative attitude of teachers	0	0.0	26	24.5	16	15.1	40	37.7	24	22.6	<b>2.42</b>

**Source: Author (2015)**

Findings in Table 10 reveal that majority of the teachers indicated that class repetition influenced dropout to moderate extent (M=3.11) and that inadequate physical facilities such as classrooms influenced dropout to moderate extent (M=2.96). An additional requisite for meaningful teaching and learning to happen is infrastructure and teaching / learning materials.

Availability of physical facilities such as classrooms, toilets, desks, water tanks and food is important in retaining children in school and therefore, in the case that these facilities are not adequately provided then pupils can drop out of school. Hygienic conditions need to be maintained in schools for proper learning to occur. There is a critical shortage of learning materials, which constrains offering quality education and this can contribute to dropout.

From the table, majority of the teachers were of the opinion that school punishment (M=2.25), shortage of teachers (M=2.34), negative attitude of teachers (M=2.42) all contributed to low extent to the pupils' dropout in Imenti North Sub County. Teachers disagreed that inadequate teaching and learning resources influenced dropout. The results further show that quality of education (M=1.7), poor sanitation (M=1.7) did not at all influence dropout in the sub county.

#### 4.3.3 Pupil Characteristics Influencing Pupils' Dropout

Respondents were required to respond to given pupils characteristics that were believed to contribute to dropouts in primary schools. The information was analysed by determining the mean on five items on a 5 – point Likert scale where: Very great extent = 5; Great extent = 4, Moderate extent = 3; Low extent = 2; Not at all =1. However, the ranges of mean scores were interpreted as follows: Very great extent = 4.2 – 5.0; Great extent = 3.4 -.4.2; Moderate extent = 2.6 -3.4; Low extent = 1.8 -2.6; Not at all 1.0 – 1.8. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 11.

**TABLE 11**  
**Pupil characteristics influencing pupils' dropout (Head teachers' responses)**

Pupil characteristics	Level of agreement										M
	VGE		GE		ME		LE		NAA		
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Indiscipline	4	22.2	7	38.9	2	11.1	4	22.2	1	5.6	<b>3.50</b>
Teenage pregnancies	0	0.0	0	0.0	5	27.8	10	55.6	3	16.7	<b>2.11</b>
Poor academic performance	0	0.0	5	27.8	7	38.9	4	22.2	2	11.1	<b>2.83</b>
Drug abuse	9	50.0	3	16.7	1	5.6	2	11.1	3	16.7	<b>3.72</b>
Distance from school	0	0.0	7	38.9	5	27.8	2	11.1	4	22.2	<b>2.83</b>

**Source: Author (2015)**

According to Table 11, majority of the head teachers indicated that indiscipline contributed to pupils dropout to a great extent (M=3.5) and that drug abuse contributed school dropout to a great extent (M=3.72). The table also shows that poor academic performance (M=2.83) and distance from school (M=2.83) influenced dropout to a moderate

extent. Teenage pregnancies influenced pupil dropout to a low extent (M=2.11). Similar findings were obtained from the teachers as shown in Table 12.

**TABLE 12**  
**Pupil characteristics influencing pupils' dropout (Teachers' responses)**

Pupil characteristics	Level of agreement										M
	VGE		GE		ME		LE		NAA		
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Indiscipline	40	37.7	34	32.1	8	7.5	8	7.5	16	15.1	<b>3.70</b>
Teenage pregnancies	0	0.0	24	22.6	40	37.7	26	24.5	16	15.1	<b>2.68</b>
Poor academic performance	0	0.0	24	22.6	58	54.7	16	15.1	8	7.5	<b>2.92</b>
Drug abuse	8	7.5	26	24.5	24	22.6	16	15.1	8	7.5	<b>2.42</b>
Distance from school	34	32.1	8	7.5	16	15.1	24	22.6	24	22.6	<b>3.04</b>

**Source: Author (2015)**

According to Table 12, majority of the teachers indicated that indiscipline contributed to pupils dropout to a great extent (M=3.70), that distance from school (M=3.04) contributed to a moderate extent to dropout, that poor academic performance (M=2.92) contributed to a moderate extent to pupils' dropout and that teenage pregnancies influenced dropout to a moderate extent (M=2.68).

The table also shows that drug abuse influenced pupil dropout to a low extent (M=2.42). Head teachers provided other pupil characteristics that could influence dropout. Table 13 summarizes the findings.

**TABLE 13**  
**Other pupil characteristics influencing pupils' dropout (Head teachers' responses)**

Pupil characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Peer influence	16	<b>88.89</b>
Parents abdicating their responsibilities	13	<b>72.22</b>
Lack of motivation	10	<b>55.56</b>
Personal choice	3	<b>16.67</b>
Pupil's self-esteem	7	<b>38.89</b>

**Source: Author (2015)**

Findings in Table 13 summarize other factors that were cited by the head teachers that could influence pupil dropout. Majority of the head teachers (88.89%) felt that peer

influence and parents abdicating their responsibilities (72.22%) were among the major contributing pupil characteristics to pupils' dropout. Others included lack of motivation (55.56%), pupils' self esteem (38.89%) and personal choice (16.67%).

Once learners are enrolled in primary school, they interact with each other and form peer groups which may sometimes spurs adolescents to be misguided out of normal expectations by their families, school and society due to their difference in peer pressure control, which could eventually contribute to school dropout. Moreover, adolescents tend to perceive their future in concordance with their peers and as a result, young adults who are surrounded by friends who place low or no value on pursuing education may also forgo attending school.

#### 4.4 Hypothesis Testing

Three hypotheses were tested in this study. This section provides findings of the correlation and regression analysis to identify the relationships between socioeconomic factors, school based factors and pupils' characteristics and pupils' dropout in Imenti North Sub County.

##### 4.4.1 Relationship between socioeconomic factors, school based factors and pupil characteristics and pupils dropout

This study sought to establish whether there was any statistically significant relationship between the independent variables (socioeconomic factors, school based factors and pupil characteristics) and pupils' dropout in public primary schools in Imenti North Sub-County. The hypotheses were tested using linear regression. The results are presented in table 14, 15 and 16. Table 14 presents the model summary showing the correlation (r) and the coefficient of determination (R-square)

**TABLE 14**  
**Model summary for the relationship between independent variables (socio-economic factors, school based factors and pupil characteristics) and pupils' dropout.**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.164(a)	.027	-.197	.87211
a. Predictors: (Constant), Socio-economic factors, school based factors and pupil				

characteristics,
b. Dependent Variable: Average Dropout

**Source: Author (2015)**

According to Table 14 r is equal to 0.164, indicating that the independent variables (socio-economic factors, school based factors and pupil characteristics) had a weak influence on pupil dropout. The value of R squared is 0.027, indicating that the independent variables explain 2.7% of the variability in the dropout of pupils in public primary schools in Imenti North Sub County. Table 15 presents the ANOVA table showing the p value for the relationship between independent variables and dependent variable.

**TABLE 15**  
**ANOVA table showing the p value for the relationship between independent variables and dependent variable**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.275	3	.092	.120	.946(a)
	Residual	9.887	13	.761		
	Total	10.162	16			
a Predictors: (Constant), Socioeconomic Factors, School Based Factors, Pupil Characteristics,						
b Dependent Variable: Average Dropout						

**Source: Author (2015)**

According to Table 15, the F – statistic was 0.120 with  $p = 0.946 > 0.05$  suggesting that there was no statistically significant relationship between the independent variable (socioeconomic factors, school based factors and pupil characteristics) and the dependent variable (pupils’ dropout) in public primary schools in Imenti North Sub County. Table 16 presents the estimates for coefficients of the model.

**TABLE 16**  
**Estimates for coefficients of the model for the relationship between independent variables (socioeconomic factors, school based factors and pupil characteristics) and dependent variable (pupils’ dropout)**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.730	2.203		1.693	.114
	Socioeconomic Factors	-.530	.904	-.161	-.586	.568
	School Based Factors	-.042	.301	-.052	-.138	.892

Pupil Characteristics	.004	.299	.005	.013	.990
a) Dependent Variable: Average Dropout					

**Source: Author (2015)**

Results in table 16 indicate that there was no statistical significant relationship between socio-economic factors and pupils' dropout in public primary schools in Imenti North Sub-County ( $p=0.568>0.05$ ). Therefore the study accepts the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between socio-economic factors and pupils' dropout in Imenti North Sub-County.

Findings in table 16 how that there was no statistical significant relationship between school based factors and pupils' dropout in public primary schools in Imenti North Sub-County ( $p=0.892>0.05$ ). Therefore the study accepts the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between school based factors and pupils dropout in Imenti North Sub-County.

According to Table 16, there was no statistical significant relationship between school pupils' characteristics and pupils' dropout in public primary schools in Imenti North Sub-County ( $p=0.990>0.05$ ). Therefore the study accepts the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between school based factors and pupils dropout in Imenti North Sub-County.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents a summary of the main findings, conclusions drawn from the findings and recommendations made. It also gives suggestions for further studies.

#### **5.2 Discussion**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the causes of pupils' dropout in public primary schools in Imenti North Sub-County. The study addressed socio-economic factors, school based factors and pupil characteristics as the causes of school dropout.

### **5.2.1 Social-Economic Factors**

Majority of the respondents strongly agreed that children from poor families drop out of school more than children who are from better off families (M=4.33), that parents with high level of education send their children to school more than those with low education level (M=4.39) and that though the user charges have been abolished in primary schools, there are other hidden costs hindering retention of pupils in public primary schools (M=4.28). These results imply that poverty, parents' education level and fee charges were among the major contributors to dropout in primary schools in Imenti North Sub County.

The study findings also show that majority of the head teachers agreed that children often drop out of school for wage labour in order to supplement the family income (M=3.78) and that the family size had an impact on primary school dropout (M=3.44). Head teachers (88.89%) felt that poverty was a factor contributing to pupil drop-out from public primary schools. Lack of community and parental support was cited as a factor contributing to dropout among pupils.

In general, students in low socioeconomic neighbourhoods are more likely to drop out of school than students in more affluent neighbourhoods. This finding is in line with South *et al.* (2003) findings. In their longitudinal study of over 1,100 students, South, Baumer, and Lutz (2003) found that the socioeconomic status of a student's neighbourhood is more associated with the probability of dropping out than adolescents' delinquent behaviour, student attachment to school and parents, and parental control over adolescent behaviour. They also suggested that students in socioeconomically distressed neighborhoods feel that school completion offers little either to improve the quality of life in their neighbourhood or to provide mobility into a better one.

The findings are also in line with findings of a study carried out in Tanzania on children's enrolment in school by Renzulli and Park (2000) who observed that virtually all households responding said that the main barrier to sending and maintaining children in school was financial and their inability to pay. This relates to what Cocough (2000) describes

as the link between wealth and schooling retention in more detail. Cocough (2000) noted that children in rural areas and those that are in poor homes drop out of school earlier in great numbers, and fail to make the transition to high school compared to their peers in richer homes.

There were several cultural factors affecting dropout. In this study culture therefore downplayed the role of a girl child in the family, denying her an opportunity to receive education and contribute to the economic development of her community. The girls' enrolment in school at lower classes is very high, but they drop out in large numbers in upper classes because at this stage, they have attained the age when they ought to undergo the cultural rite of passage leading to womanhood. They are therefore forcibly withdrawn from school or they fall out on their own volition on account of the informal teaching they received on the value of being circumcised.

There were also cases of pupils dropping out of schools due to early marriage. Kakuru (2003), Kasente (2004) explain how early marriages influence children's dropping out of school especially as regards the girl child as it is perceived by parents that marrying off the girl is an escape route from poverty.

Study findings suggested that parents' education level was among the major contributors to dropout in primary schools in Imenti North Sub County. Findings with regard to the impact of parents' education on schooling of children from other studies show that the children of more educated parents are more likely to progress further through school.

Holmes (2003) showed that this impact differs by gender, the education of the father increase the expected level of school retention of boys, and that of the mother's enhances attainment of girls. Similarly other studies by Behman et al, (1999) cited by Swada and Lokshin (2001) reported a consistently positive and significant coefficient of father's and mother's education at all levels of education.



### **5.2.2 School Based Factors**

Head teachers indicated that class repetition influenced dropout to moderate extent (M=2.89), that shortage of teachers influenced dropout to a moderate extent (M=3.00), that inadequate physical facilities such as classrooms influenced dropout to moderate extent (M=3.17) and that negative attitude of teachers influenced dropout to moderate extent (M=2.89). Majority of the head teachers were of the opinion that school punishment (M=2.22), quality of education (M=2.39), inadequate teaching and learning resources (M=2.56) and poor sanitation (M=2.44) all contributed to low extent to the pupils' dropout in Imenti North Sub-County. An additional requisite for meaningful teaching and learning to happen is infrastructure and teaching learning materials.

Availability of physical facilities such as classrooms, toilets, desks, water tanks and food is important in retaining children at school and therefore in the case that these facilities are not adequately provided then pupils can drop out of school. Hygienic conditions need to be maintained in schools for proper learning to occur. There is a critical shortage of learning materials, which constrains offering quality education and this can contribute to dropout. Teachers gave similar responses.

### **5.2.3 Pupils' Characteristics**

Majority of the head teachers indicated that indiscipline contributed to pupils dropout to a great extent (M=3.5) and that drug abuse contributed school dropout to a great extent (M=3.72). Poor academic performance (M=2.83) and distance from school (M=2.83) influenced dropout to a moderate extent. Teenage pregnancies influenced pupil dropout to a low extent (M=2.11). Majority of the head teachers (89.89) felt that peer influence and parents abdicating their responsibilities (72.22%) were among the major contributing pupil characteristics to pupil dropout. Others included lack of motivation (55.56%), pupils' self esteem (38.89%) and personal choice (16.67%).

Cultural practices like early marriages and passage of rites (male circumcision) contributed also to dropout as indicated by 55.56% of the head teachers. The study findings

reveal that 44.44% of the head teachers felt that death of one or both parents had contributed to a greater extent to dropout from public primary schools. Majority (77.78%) of the head teachers felt that pupil's dropout was as a result of irresponsible parents. Drug abuse was another factor cited by the head teachers that contributed to pupils' dropout. Head teachers (72.22%) felt that unstable family backgrounds contribute to dropout among pupils.

School heads indicated that peer pressure and motivation to continue with education were the pupil factors that affected dropout. These findings are similar to findings by Dekkers and Eccles (1996) who studied the way students value education and how this affected their progression in education. Their results showed that pupils were motivated in their education by their expectation of the benefits based on their perception of what had actually happened in the past and by their experience of how education had benefited elder family members and significant others in their environment.

According to Wrigley (1995), once learners are enrolled in primary school, they interact with each other and form peer groups which may sometimes spurs adolescents to be misguided out of normal expectations by their families, school and society due to their difference in peer pressure control which could eventually result in pupils dropping out of school. Moreover, pupils tend to perceive their future in concordance with their peers and as a result, children who are surrounded by friends who place low or no value on pursuing education may also forgo attending school or at least delay to transit (Tomkowicz and Bushnik, 2003).

### **5.3 Conclusions**

Based on the findings of the study as summarized above, it can be concluded that primary school education is a worthy initiative as it forms the basis of education despite the challenge of dropout. In searching for the factors contributing to pupils' dropout prior to completion of primary education, the first objective sought to investigate the influence of socio-economic factors on dropout. From the findings it was noted that pupils often dropout of school for

wage labour in order to supplement the family income (M=3.78) and that family size had an impact on primary school dropout (M=3.44).

The second objective was to establish the school based factors that influence dropout. The study established that class repetition influenced dropout to moderate extent (M=3.11) and that inadequate physical facilities also influence dropout moderate extend (M=2.96).

The third objective was to determine the influence of pupil characteristics on pupils' dropout. The study established that indiscipline contribute to dropout to great extent (M=3.5) and poor academic performance (M=2.92) contributed to moderate extent to pupils' dropout. Majority of the head teachers (88.89%) felt that peer influence was the major contributing pupil characteristic to pupils' dropout.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

- i. The government should introduce feeding programme to all primary schools. The study established that some children come from poor backgrounds and could not afford the basic needs (food and clothing) for their children.
- ii. The government should take stern measures against people who employ children to pave way for these children to go school. This will eventually increase their participation in primary school education and reduce school dropout.
- iii. The government should allocate more funds and resources to primary schools to ensure that free primary education runs smoothly without compromising the quality of education. The study established lack of enough resources as a factor that led to dropout.
- iv. Head teachers should invite the community around the school to aid in development programmes and projects. The school should also initiate income generating projects to subsidize government funding.
- v. Head teachers should put in place education and counselling programmes to educate pupils and the community at large the importance of education to the young generation who have a whole life ahead of them.

## 5.5 Suggestions for Further Research

This study suggests that:-

- i. A similar study to be carried in other sub counties which were not covered by the study.
- ii. To obtain a better general picture of school dropout in Imenti North Sub County, similar studies should be carried out among other students groups like high school students.
- iii. A study is also necessary to investigate factors contributing to school dropout taking a comparison of how teachers and pupils perceive the reasons for dropping out of school.
- iv. The researcher also recommends a study to investigate the long-term effects and impact of drug abuse on the academic performance of pupils in the country.

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d. PI [ ]

e. Others (specify).....

4. How long you have been in this school?

a. 0-2 years [ ]                      b. 3-4 years [ ]

c. 5-6 years [ ]                      d. Over 6 years [ ]

**Section B. Enrolment and Dropout Rate**

5. Indicate in the table below the enrolment of pupils in your school.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>Total</b>
2010			
2011			
2012			
2013			
2014			

6. Indicate the number of pupils who dropped out of your school in the years shown below.

	<b>Number of Dropouts</b>			
<b>Year</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>Total</b>	
2010				
2011				
2012				
2013				
2014				

7. Please indicate by ticking in the appropriate box the level in which the problem of dropout is much pronounced.

Lower Primary [ ]

Upper Primary [ ]

Same for both lower and upper [ ]

**Section C: Socio-economic Factors**

8. The table below presents statements about socio-economic factors that could influence dropout in primary schools. Based on your own experience as a head teacher, indicate your

level of agreement with these statements. Use a scale of 1 – 5 where 1- Strongly disagree, 2 -Disagree, 3 – Neutral, 4- Agree and 5 - Strongly agree.

Socio-economic Factors	Level of agreement				
	5	4	3	2	1
Children from poor families drop out of school more than children who are from better off families.					
Children often drop out of school for wage labour in order to supplement the family income.					
The family size has an impact on primary school dropout.					
Parent with high level of education send their children to school more than those with low education level.					
With the introduction of FPE, financial status of households does not influence pupils’ dropout in public primary schools.					
Though the user charges have been abolished in primary schools, there are other “hidden costs” hindering retention of pupils in public primary schools.					

9. Which other socio-economic factors influence dropout in Imenti North Sub-County?

.....  
 .....

**Section D: School Based Factors and Pupil Characteristics that Influence Pupils Dropout.**

10. The table below presents some school based factors and pupil characteristics that influence pupils’ dropout. Based on your own experience as a head teacher, to what extent do the following factors influence dropout. Use a scale of 1-5, where 1 = NOT at all, 2-low extent, 3-moderate extent, 4-great extent and 5- very great extent.

	1	2	3	4	5
School punishments					
Class repetition					
Quality of Education					
Shortage of teachers					
Inadequate physical facilities such as classrooms.					
Indiscipline					
Teenage pregnancies					
Inadequate learning resources e.g textbooks.					
Poor sanitation					
Poor academic performance					
Negative attitude of teachers					
Drug abuse					
Distance to and from school					

11. Which other school based factors and pupil characteristics influence pupils' dropout in primary schools?

.....  
 .....

**Section E: Suggestions for Curbing Dropout**

12. What in your own opinion can the following stakeholders in education do to improve participation and completion in primary education?

Government

.....  
 .....

Parents

.....  
.....  
.....

Head teachers

.....  
.....  
.....

Teachers

.....  
.....  
.....

Community

.....  
.....  
.....

Pupils themselves

.....  
.....

Thank you for your co-operation.

## APPENDIX II

### Teachers' Questionnaire

This questionnaire is aimed at collecting data on the causes of pupil's dropout in primary schools of Imenti North Sub-County. The researcher would like to assure you that the information you provide will be treated in utmost confidence and will only be used for academic purpose. Please respond to all items as honestly and precisely as possible. Please tick (✓) where appropriate or fill in the required information in the spaces provided.

#### Section A. Background Information

1. Age a. 20-30 years                       b. 31-40 years   
                    c. 41-50 years                       d. 51-60 years

2. Gender            a. Male                       b. Female

3. Indicate your current academic qualification

M.Ed

B.Ed

Diploma

P1

Others (specify).....

4. How long have you been in this school?

- a. 0-2 years                       b. 3-4 years   
c. 5-6 years                       d. Over 6 years

## Section B. Enrolment and Dropout Rate

5. In the course of your stay in this school, have there been pupils who have dropped out of school.

Yes  No

6. Which gender has been dropping out more?

Boys  Girls

7. Please indicate the level in which the problem of dropout is much pronounced

Lower Primary

Upper Primary

Same for both lower and upper primary

## Section C: Socio-economic Factors

8. The table below presents statements about socio-economic factors that can influence pupils' dropout in primary schools. Based on your own experience as a teacher, indicate your level of agreement with these statements. Use a scale of 1 – 5 where 1- Strongly disagree, 2 -Disagree, 3 – Neutral, 4- Agree and 5 - Strongly agree.

Socio-economic Factors	Level of agreement				
	5	4	3	2	1
Children from poor families drop out of school more than children who are from better-off families.					
Children often drop out of school for wage labour in order to supplement the family income.					
The family size has an impact on primary school dropout.					
Parents with high level of education send their children to school more than those with low level of education.					
With the introduction of FPE, financial status of households does not influence pupils' dropout in public primary schools.					
Though the user charges have been abolished in primary schools, there are other "hidden costs" hindering retention of pupils in public primary schools.					



9. Which other socio-economic factors influence dropout in Imenti North Sub-County?

.....

.....

.....

**Section D: School Based Factors and Pupil Characteristics that Influence Dropout.**

10. The table below presents some school based factors and pupils characteristics that influence pupils’ dropout. Based on your own experience as a teacher, to what extent do the following factors influence dropout. Use a scale of 1-5, where 1- Not at all, 2-Low extent, 3-Moderate extent, 4-great extent and 5-Very great extent.

	1	2	3	4	5
School Punishments					
Class repetition					
Quality of education					
Shortage of teachers					
Inadequate physical facilities such as classrooms					
Indiscipline					
Teenage Pregnancies					
Inadequate learning resources e.g textbooks.					
Poor Sanitation					
Poor academic performance					
Negative attitude of teachers					
Drug abuse					
Distance to and from school					

11. Which other school based factors and pupil characteristics influence pupils’ dropout in primary schools?

.....

.....

.....

**Section E: Suggestions for Curbing Dropout**

12. What in your own opinion can the following stakeholders in education do to improve participation and completion in primary education?

Government

.....  
.....  
.....

Parents

.....  
.....  
.....

Head teachers

.....  
.....

Teachers

.....  
.....

Community

.....  
.....

Pupils themselves

.....  
.....

Thank you for your co-operation.

## APPENDIX III

### Introduction Letter from KCA University



Thika Road, Ruareka  
P.O. Box 56808-00200 Nairobi Kenya  
Pilot Line: +254 20 8070408/9  
Tel: +254 20 3537842  
Fax: +254 20 8561077  
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Email: [kca@kca.ac.ke](mailto:kca@kca.ac.ke)  
Website: [www.kca.ac.ke](http://www.kca.ac.ke)

KCA/SGS/MED/Nov.15/63

2<sup>nd</sup> November 2015

To whom it may concern,

Dear Sir/Madam,

**RE: RHODA KANIIRU THIRUANE REG NO. 14/01413**

It is my distinct pleasure to introduce to you Ms. Rhoda Thiruane who is a student in our institution pursuing a Master of Education at the Faculty of Education and Arts.

Rhoda is conducting a research on a topic titled: *"Investigating The Causes of Pupils Dropout In Public Primary Schools in Imenti North Sub-County, Meru County Kenya"* which is part of the requirements of the program she is pursuing. The research as well as the data procured thereof shall be used for academic purposes only.

Any assistance accorded to her is highly appreciated.

In case of further inquiry, do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Yours faithfully,

Dr. R. Muchiri Mwangi  
Dean, School of Graduate Studies & Research