

**CAUSES OF SCHOOL DROPOUT AMONG MALE STUDENTS IN PUBLIC  
SECONDARY SCHOOL IN THIKA SUBCOUNTY, KIAMBU COUNTY, KENYA**

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REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF  
EDUCATION GRETSA UNIVERSITY**

**DECEMBER, 2024**

## DECLARATION

### DECLARATION


This Project is my original work and has never been presented for the award of any similar purpose in any other institution.

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# Table of Contents

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>DECLARATION .....</b>                                   | <b>ii</b> |
| <b>Abstract .....</b>                                      | <b>v</b>  |
| <b>CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....</b>                      | <b>1</b>  |
| 1.0 Introduction .....                                     | 1         |
| 1.1 Background of the study.....                           | 1         |
| 1.2 Statement of the research problem.....                 | 4         |
| 1.3 Purpose of the study.....                              | 4         |
| 1.4 Conceptual framework.....                              | 4         |
| 1.6 Objectives of the study .....                          | 5         |
| 1.6.1 General objectives .....                             | 5         |
| 1.6.2 Specific Objectives .....                            | 5         |
| 1.7 Significance of the study .....                        | 5         |
| 1.8 Limitations of the study .....                         | 5         |
| 1.9 Assumption.....  | 5         |
| <b>CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW.....</b>                 | <b>6</b>  |
| 2.1 Introduction .....                                     | 6         |
| 2.2.1 Theory of Institutional Departure .....              | 6         |
| 2.2.2 Push-Out Theory .....                                | 7         |
| 2.3 Concept of cause of male student dropout.....          | 7         |
| 2.4 Family factor to male student dropout.....             | 8         |
| 2.5 Individual factors to male student school dropout..... | 9         |
| 2.6 School factor to male student dropout .....            | 10        |
| 2.7 Summary of Literature.....                             | 11        |
| <b>CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY.....</b>                         | <b>11</b> |
| 3.1 Introduction .....                                     | 11        |
| 3.2 Research Design .....                                  | 11        |
| 3.3 Study Area .....                                       | 11        |
| 3.4 Target Population .....                                | 12        |
| 3.5 Sample Technique .....                                 | 12        |
| 3.6 Sample Size .....                                      | 12        |
| 3.7 Measurement of Variables.....                          | 13        |
| 3.8 Research Instruments.....                              | 13        |
| 3.8.1 Questionnaires .....                                 | 13        |

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| 3.8.2 Interview .....  | 13        |
| 3.9 Validity and Reliability.....                                    | 14        |
| 3.10 Data Analysis.....  | 14        |
| 3.11 Logistical and Ethical Considerations .....                     | 14        |
| <b>CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION.....</b>                    | <b>15</b> |
| 4.0. Introduction .....  | 15        |
| 4.1 Response rate.....   | 15        |
| 4.2 Gender Distribution .....  | 16        |
| 4.3 Age distribution .....   | 17        |
| 4.4 Relationship between Individual factors and school dropout ..... | 18        |
| 4.4.1 Strategies for Retention .....                                 | 19        |
| 4.5 Family Factors Leading to Dropout.....                           | 21        |
| 4.5.1 Financial Difficulties as the Primary Factor .....             | 21        |
| 4.5.2 Impact of Lack of Parental Involvement .....                   | 22        |
| 4.5.3 Family Conflicts as a Contributing Factor.....                 | 22        |
| 4.5.4 Other Family Issues .....                                      | 22        |
| 4.5.5 Summary of Strategies for Addressing Family Factors.....       | 22        |
| 4.6 Relationship between school factors and school dropout .....     | 23        |
| <b>CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....</b>    | <b>25</b> |
| 5.1. Introduction .....  | 25        |
| 5.2 Summary.....   | 25        |
| 5.3 Conclusion.....  | 25        |
| 5.4 Recommendations .....  | 26        |
| Reference .....  | 26        |

## **Abstract**

This study aimed to identify the causes of school dropout among secondary school students in Thika sub-county, Kiambu County, Kenya, and to explore strategies to mitigate this issue. Data was collected from 9 principals, 85 teachers, and 182 students, yielding an 84% response rate. The findings revealed that school dropout rates were influenced by a combination of academic challenges, financial constraints, and personal issues such as family problems and health concerns. A lack of motivation and disengagement from school were also significant factors contributing to dropout rates. The study highlighted the need for a holistic approach to address these challenges, including academic support, vocational training, financial aid, and increased parental and community involvement. Based on the findings, the study recommends several key strategies to reduce dropout rates. These include the development of financial aid programs, strengthening academic support systems, enhancing counseling services, and promoting parental involvement in students' education. Additionally, fostering a positive school environment and providing community support can play a crucial role in reducing dropout rates. The study emphasizes the importance of a comprehensive approach to tackle the socio-economic and academic challenges faced by students, ensuring a supportive environment that encourages persistence and academic success. Future research is needed to evaluate the effectiveness of these strategies and explore further interventions to improve educational outcomes and reduce dropout rates in secondary schools.

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.0 Introduction**

This chapter introduces the issue of school dropout, focusing on its impact, particularly among male students in secondary school. It explores key factors contributing to dropout rates, such as lack of motivation, socio-economic challenges, and personal issues. The chapter also highlights the broader consequences of dropping out, including limited future opportunities and social consequences.

### **1.1 Background of the study**

School dropout is defined as the permanent or temporary discontinuation of formal education before the completion of the primary or secondary education cycle. It is a serious problem that affects millions of children around the world, and it is particularly prevalent among male students in secondary school. According to Rumberger (2011), the term "school dropout" refers to a student who leaves formal education before completing their studies or obtaining a diploma or degree. This typically implies that the student discontinues their education prematurely and does not enroll in another educational institution.

Rumberger (2011) further states that lack of interest or motivation is one of the primary reasons students drop out of school. He notes, "Some students may become disengaged or lose interest in their studies due to various reasons. They might find the curriculum uninteresting or irrelevant to their goals, leading them to drop out" (p. 45). Similarly, Bridgeland, DiIulio, and Morison (2006) highlight that 47% of students drop out because they find school boring or unengaging, emphasizing the need for a curriculum that resonates with students' aspirations and interests.

Moreover, according to UNESCO (2020), external factors such as economic challenges, family responsibilities, and socio-cultural pressures also contribute to school dropout rates, particularly in low-income countries. These challenges often disproportionately affect male students who may be required to enter the labor force to support their families, further exacerbating dropout rates.

Cabrera, N., & Hengstler, D. (2021) on high school dropout among English learners indicates that dropping out of school means quitting formal education before reaching the necessary level of

education or earning a diploma or degree. It is a big issue in numerous educational systems all around the world. Students who leave school early lose out on educational chances and may encounter difficulties in their pursuit of personal growth and future work opportunities.

Dropout rates based on factors related to socioeconomic cultural norms, and educational regulations, dropout rates can vary among countries and geographical areas. Dropout rates can also be influenced by variables like gender, race, financial level, and location.

Wang, Z., & Reynolds, A. J. (2022) on the impacts of high school dropout on future employment and earnings indicates that major factors contributing to school dropout among male students in secondary school is poor academic performance. Male students are more likely to struggle academically than female students, and they are also more likely to be placed in special education classes. This may be due to a number of factors, such as different learning styles, different interests, and different social pressures. Lack of motivation: Some male students may not be motivated to stay in school because they do not see the value of education, or because they have negative experiences at school, such as bullying or harassment.

Personal and family problems: Personal and family problems, such as illness, disability, or domestic violence, can also lead to school dropout.

Lack of access to education: In some parts of the world, male students may not have access to education, either because there are no schools in their community or because they cannot afford to attend.

Kanyoro, M. W., & Mwenda, M. M. (2020). On School dropout among adolescents in Kenya. State that School dropout is a serious problem in Africa, with millions of children dropping out of school each year. This has a devastating impact on individuals and societies, as dropouts are more likely to live in poverty, be unemployed, and engage in criminal activity.

Suart Robertson (2018) on impacts of dropping out of school explain the following consequences: Unemployment. A person's decision to drop out of high school may have an impact on them in various ways, including a higher likelihood of becoming unemployed. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that in 2017, the unemployment rate for young high school leavers was over 54%. The Bureau additionally noted in March 2018 that those who only completed high school had a much lower jobless rate than those who did not. The unemployment rate for high school graduates was 4.6 percent, while the rate for dropouts was 6.5 percent.

**Reduced Income :**When high school dropouts do get a job, they often make a lot less money than people who finished high school. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics' 2018 study, Americans who dropped out of high school made only 73% of what their high school-graduated friends made. The discrepancy between these two categories was the biggest in the United States out of all the nations covered by the survey.

**Incarceration:**High school dropouts are also more likely to be imprisoned in a correctional facility, such as a jail or a juvenile detention facility. 30% of imprisoned people had dropped out of high school, according to the U.S. Program for the Study of International Assessment for Adult Competencies (PIAAC) Survey of Incarcerated people. In particular, male African American high school dropouts had a nearly 70% greater rate of incarceration than high school graduates.

**Opportunities Lost:** Missing out on all the opportunities that arise as a result of graduating high school is another, less obvious, negative effect of dropping out of high school. Playing team sports, making friends, and pursuing intellectual pursuits are all terrific things to do in high school. Students who graduate from high school have the option of continuing their education in a post-secondary institution to broaden their options. They leave that choice open for later in life even if they decide not to. While there are many bad elements to dropping out of school, people do have a second chance opportunity with the GED, also known as a high school equivalency program and awarded internationally.

Finally report by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) published in 2022 that provides some insights into the causes of school dropout in Kenya as a whole, especially Kiambu county.

**Long distances to school:** Many students in Kiambu County live in rural areas and have to travel long distances to school. This can be tiring and time-consuming, and it can also be dangerous, especially for girls.

**Lack of school fees:** Even though primary education is free in Kenya, there are still some costs associated with schooling, such as uniforms and supplies. Students from low-income families may not be able to afford these costs, and may be forced to drop out.

**Poor quality of education:** Some students in Kiambu County do not have access to quality education. This may be due to a lack of resources, unqualified teachers, or a curriculum that is not relevant to their needs.

**Violence in schools:** Violence in schools is a problem in some parts of Kiambu County. Students who feel unsafe at school are more likely to drop out.



## 1.2 Statement of the research problem.

Generally School dropout is a serious problem globally but in Kenya, according to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS), the male dropout rate for secondary school students has been so high since other sectors have been given more priority, especially in Thika subcounty, Kiambu county, Kenya, the researchers have not conducted their research therefore I will focus on the specific sub county.

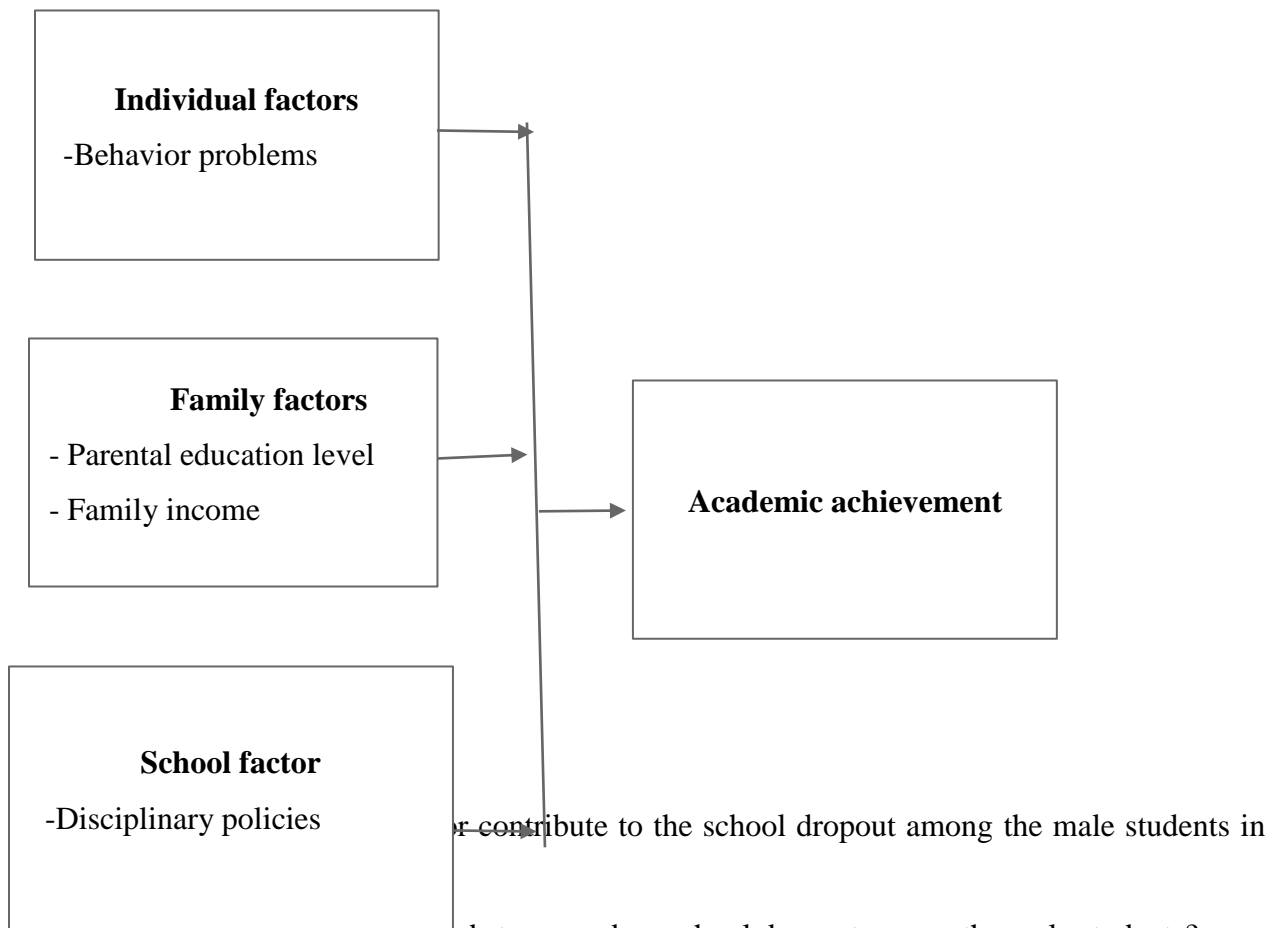
## 1.3 Purpose of the study

This study seeks to find out causes of school dropout among male students of secondary schools in Thika sub-county, Kiambu county, Kenya.

## 1.4 Conceptual framework

### Independent variable.

### Dependent variable



ii. How does family factor leads to secondary school dropout among the male students?

- iii. How does school factors causing secondary school dropout among male students?

## **1.6 Objectives of the study**

### **1.6.1 General objectives**

To find out the causes of school dropout among male students in public secondary school in Thika subcounty, Kiambu county, Kenya.

### **1.6.2 Specific Objectives**

- i. To determine how individual factor contributes to the school dropout among the male students in secondary school?
- ii. To determine how family factor leads to secondary school dropout among the male students?
- iii. To establish how school factors causing secondary school dropout among male students?

## **1.7 Significance of the study**

The study's results shed light on how public schools' dropout among male students can minimized and how to improve on factors leading to the dropout. Ultimately, the findings contributed to improving male student performance and the entire student fraternity, enabling improvement in education system in Kenya and Africa as a whole.

## **1.8 Limitations of the study**

The study was limited only to Thika public secondary school, Thika Sub-county, Kiambu County, Kenya.

It is difficult to deal with students facing dropout since they are affected with home factors which tend to be more difficult to overcome since most of them seems to be more cultural aspect.

## **1.9 Assumption**

The researcher assumed that the population is not affected by other factors such as political and economic factors. Therefore, the selected sample of the educational institutions within Thika

subcounty was a representative of the entire institutions in Kenya. The researcher assumed that the information collected was adequate data to address the research question.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses about the causes of school dropout among male students in public secondary school including: family factors, individual factors and school factors. It also identify the possible gaps in the study, a theoretical framework and summary of the review.

### **2.2 Theoretical framework**

#### **2.2.1 Theory of Institutional Departure**

The theory of Institutional Departure was proposed by Vincent Tinto in 1975. This theory suggests that students are more likely to drop out of school when they are not integrated into the school community and do not feel a sense of belonging. Tinto argues that students need to develop both academic and social bonds with their school in order to stay enrolled. Academic integration which refers to the extent to which a student feels successful in their academic work. Students who are struggling academically are more likely to drop out of school. Social integration also refers to the extent to which a student feels connected to their classmates and teachers. Students who have

positive relationships with their peers and teachers are more likely to stay in school. Thus, Theory of Institutional Departure has been supported by a number of studies, and it is one of the most widely accepted theories of school dropout.

### **2.2.2 Push-Out Theory**

The theory of Push-Out Theory was proposed by Joyce Epstein in 1993. According to this view, student dropouts are not always their own choice. As a result of unjust or discriminatory treatment, they might be expelled from school. According to Epstein, pupils are more likely to be expelled if they are: Minority group members, schoolchildren with disabilities, students from disadvantaged backgrounds, students with behavioral issues. Some have questioned the Push-Out Theory for putting too much emphasis on the part that schools play in dropout rates. However, it has also received praise for emphasizing the significance of treating all kids fairly and equally. There are various hypotheses that have been put up to explain the reasons why male students drop out of secondary school, and these are only two of them. It's critical to remember that no one hypothesis can adequately explain this intricate phenomenon. Nevertheless, by comprehending the various causes that can cause dropouts, we can create more potent preventative measures.

### **2.3 Concept of cause of male student dropout**

It is a global issue that affects millions of students each. Therefore, it is a complex phenomenon in which male students leave school before completing their education. There are many factors that can contribute to male student dropout, including individual factors, such as academic achievement, behavior problems, and mental health challenges; family factors, such as parental education, income, and support; and school factors, such as teacher expectations, classroom environment, and discipline policies. Male students are more likely to drop out of school than female students. This is due to a number of factors, including: Gender stereotypes: Male students are often expected to be tough and independent, and they may be less likely to ask for help when they are struggling.

Academic achievement: Male students are more likely to struggle academically than female students, especially in reading and writing. Behavior problems: Male students are more likely to engage in disruptive behavior in the classroom, which can lead to disciplinary action and eventually dropout. Mental health challenges: Male students are more likely to experience mental health challenges, such as depression and anxiety, which can make it difficult to succeed in school.

The consequences of male student dropout are significant. Students who drop out of school are more likely to be unemployed, earn lower wages, and experience health problems. They are also more likely to be involved in crime and violence.

#### **2.4 Family factor to male student dropout**

A scholar by the name Smith, J. (2022) on the Impact of Family Factors on School Dropout Among Male Students in Public Secondary Schools, states that family factors can play a significant role in school dropout among male students in public secondary schools through the following ways: Lack of parental support: Students who do not have supportive parents or caregivers are more likely to drop out of school. Parents can provide support in a number of ways, such as helping their children with their homework, attending school events, and encouraging them to stay in school. Family conflict: Students who live in families with conflict are more likely to drop out of school. Conflict in the home can be distracting and stressful for students, and it can make it difficult for them to focus on their schoolwork. Family structure: Students who come from single-parent households or from households with multiple caregivers are more likely to drop out of school. These students may not have the same level of support and stability as students who come from two-parent households.

Jones, K. (2023). Family Factors and School Dropout Among Male Students, explains that these family factors can contribute to school dropout in a number of ways. For example, students who lack parental support may be more likely to feel disengaged from school and less likely to see the value of education. Students who experience poor family-school communication may feel like their parents and teachers are not working together to support their success. Students who have unrealistic parental expectations may feel overwhelmed and stressed, and may be more likely to give up on school. Students who are subjected to harsh parental discipline may be more likely to experience behavioral problems in school, which can lead to disciplinary action and eventually dropout. Students whose parents have mental health problems may experience family instability and chaos, which can make it difficult to focus on schoolwork. He concludes by arguing that it is important to address family factors when working to prevent school dropout among male students. He recommends that schools implement programs and services that support families, such as parenting classes, family support groups, and mental health services.

## **2.5 Individual factors to male student school dropout**

Brown (2023) explains that these individual factors can contribute to school dropout in a number of ways. For example, students who are struggling academically may feel disengaged from school and less likely to see the value of education. Students who have behavior problems may be more likely to experience disciplinary action and eventually dropout. Students who are struggling with mental health problems may find it difficult to focus on schoolwork and cope with the stresses of school. Students who lack motivation may not see the value of education or have other priorities. He concludes by arguing that it is important to address individual factors when working to prevent school dropout among male students. He recommends that schools implement programs and services that support students academically, behaviorally, and emotionally. He also recommends that schools work with families to help students develop a sense of purpose and motivation. He came out with the following examples: Academic struggles: Students who are struggling academically may feel discouraged and unmotivated. They may also have difficulty keeping up with their classmates and completing their assignments. This can lead to frustration and a sense of failure, which can make students more likely to drop out of school, Behavior problems: Students who have behavior problems may be disruptive in class, disrespectful to teachers, or involved in fights. This can lead to disciplinary action, such as suspension or expulsion. Students who are frequently disciplined are more likely to drop out of school.

Williams (2023) on his study explains that these individual factors can contribute to school dropout in a number of ways. For example, students who are struggling academically may feel discouraged and unmotivated. Students who have behavior problems may be more likely to experience disciplinary action and eventually dropout. Students who are struggling with mental health problems may find it difficult to focus on schoolwork and cope with the stresses of school. Students who are not engaged in school are less likely to see the value of education and are more likely to drop out. Students who are not engaged in school are less likely to see the value of education and are more likely to drop out. Students who lack motivation are less likely to put in the effort needed to succeed in school, which can increase the risk of school dropout.

Smith and Jones (2023) on their study explains that individual and family factors can contribute to school dropout in a number of ways. For example, students who are struggling academically may feel discouraged and unmotivated. Students who have behavior problems may be more likely to experience disciplinary action and eventually dropout. Students who are struggling with mental

health problems may find it difficult to focus on schoolwork and cope with the stresses of school. Students who are not engaged in school are less likely to see the value of education and are more likely to drop out. Students who lack motivation are less likely to put in the effort needed to succeed in school, which can increase the risk of school dropout.

## **2.6 School factor to male student dropout**

Jones and Smith (2022) conducted a longitudinal study of 1,000 male students in public secondary schools and found that the following school factors were associated with increased risk of school dropout

Male students who attended schools with a positive school climate were less likely to drop out of school. Teacher-student relationships: Male students who had positive relationships with their teachers were less likely to drop out of school. They continue by explaining that school climate refers to the overall feeling and atmosphere of a school. A positive school climate is one where students feel safe, respected, and supported. Teacher-student relationships refer to the quality of the relationships between teachers and their students. Positive teacher-student relationships are essential for student engagement and success.

Brown, A. (2023) on Individual and School Factors Associated With School Dropout Among Male Students in Public Secondary Schools explains that the following school factors were associated with increased risk of school dropout: Bullying and harassment: Male students who were bullied or harassed at school were more likely to drop out of school. Lack of support from school staff: Male students who did not feel supported by school staff were more likely to drop out of school after conducting a study of 500 male students in public secondary schools.

Williams, C. (2023) on the Role of School Factors in School Dropout Among Male Students explains that school discipline policies that lead to suspension or expulsion can disrupt a student's education and make it difficult for them to catch up when they return to school. He also explains that lack of extracurricular activities and opportunities for engagement can lead to students feeling disconnected from school and less likely to see the value of education, therefore he continue by indicating that the following school factors were associated with increased risk of school dropout: School discipline policies that lead to suspension or expulsion: Male students who were suspended or expelled from school were more likely to drop out of school.

Lack of extracurricular activities and opportunities for engagement: Male students who were not involved in extracurricular activities or who did not have opportunities for engagement at school were more likely to drop out of school

### **2.7 Summary of Literature**

The chapter has reviewed the literature relevant to the study and began by looking at the theories that were used in the study which lay the foundation of understanding. The study indicates that the Theory of Institutional Departure and Push-Out Theory was used. The chapter then analyses the causes of male student school dropout.

## **CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter contains research design, study area, target population, sampling technique, sample size, research instrument, validity of measurements, data analysis, logical and ethical considerations.

### **3.2 Research Design**

Research design is an activity and time-based plan, always based on the research questions, guide the selection of resources and type of information; a framework for specifying the relationship among the study variable and outlining the procedure for every research activity (Rahi 2017).

This study included the use of descriptive survey research on this descriptive variable. This is because it guarantees breach of observation and it also provides for accurate descriptive analysis of characteristics of sample which was used to make inference about study.

### **3.3 Study Area**

The study was carried out in Thika subcounty, Kiambu county, Kenya. The researcher chooses this area because Thika Town is the largest town in Kiambu County having most of the families



living in urban and accessing Thika subcounty as their most proximal and reliable Centre of institutions since it serves as the educational Centre to the entire county as well as offering a variety of services.

### **3.4 Target Population**

The targeted population for this study included individuals who were directly involved with or affected by the issue of school dropout in Thika Sub-County, Kiambu County. The targeted population was categorized as follows:

**Headteachers:** 10 headteachers from various secondary schools in Thika Sub-County, who provided insights into school-related factors contributing to dropout and strategies for retention.

**Teachers:** 100 teachers from secondary schools in the region, who shared data on classroom engagement, academic challenges, and the factors influencing student dropout.

**Students:** 215 secondary school students in Thika Sub-County, who provided personal perspectives on the reasons for disengagement and dropout, including academic difficulties, lack of motivation, and external pressures.

**Parents:** 100 parents of students in the selected secondary schools, who discussed family-related factors such as financial constraints, family responsibilities, and the level of support given to their children's education.

Thus, the targeted population for this study consisted of 425 individuals, including headteachers, teachers, students, and parents in Thika Sub-County.

### **3.5 Sample Technique**

The study was conducted using sample random sampling technique, stratified random sampling and convenient sampling technique, to acquire information from the school principal, teachers and educational officers. A stratified sampling was used to group teachers into strata to represent their prospective school. Random sampling was used to pick the grouped teachers into sample.

### **3.6 Sample Size**

In this study, we aimed to analyze the dropout rates among male students in secondary schools within Thika sub-county, Kiambu County. To conduct this analysis, we used secondary data, which includes records of students' enrollment and dropout rates over the past 5 years across multiple schools. By calculating the appropriate sample size for our analysis, we can ensure the

accuracy and reliability of the results, accounting for a desired confidence level and margin of

$$n = \frac{Z^2 \times p(1 - p)}{E^2}$$

Where:

- $Z = 1.96$  (Z-value for a 95% confidence level)
- $p = 0.2$  (estimated dropout rate of 20%, derived from 300 dropouts out of 1,500 male student)
- $E = 0.05$  (desired margin of error of 5%)

Substituting these values into the formula:

$$\begin{aligned}n &= \frac{(1.96)^2 \times 0.2 \times (1 - 0.2)}{(0.05)^2} \\n &= \frac{3.8416 \times 0.2 \times 0.8}{0.0025} \\n &= \frac{0.614656}{0.0025} \\n &= 246\end{aligned}$$

error

### 3.7 Measurement of Variables

The study used nominal scale to obtain data on how school factor, individual factor and home factor causes male school dropout.

## 3.8 Research Instruments

The research instrument that was used in the study was administration of questionnaire and interview.

### 3.8.1 Questionnaires

The questions was based on the research objectives and this enabled the researcher to gather both qualitative and quantitative information from the teachers that was used when analyzing the data. The researcher therefore administered the questionnaires personally to ensure secrecy and confidentiality to the teachers.

### 3.8.2 Interview

The researcher administered direct interview to the school principal and the educational officer to ensure provision of accurate data.

### **3.9 Validity and Reliability**

Kibera (2017) defines validity as the extent to which a researcher ensures that the study's findings meet the required standards. To maintain validity, the researcher consulted with the university supervisor to ensure content validity, allowing for the identification and correction of errors while using clear and precise language to avoid ambiguity.

Reliability, according to Mescal (2014), refers to a system's ability to consistently produce accurate results over time. It assumes that any meaningful findings should not be based on a single observation but should be reproducible. This means that other researchers, when replicating the study under the same conditions, should achieve the same results.

### **3.10 Data Analysis**

The qualitative and quantitative data that was collected was analyzed quantitatively through content analysis and be organized in various themes. The outcome from the analyzed data shall then be presented in form of tables, charts and paragraphs.

Content Analysis refers to a research method used to systematically analyze the content of various forms of communication (such as text, speech, or visual media). It involves identifying patterns, themes, or specific details within the content, and organizing them into categories for further interpretation.

### **3.11 Logistical and Ethical Considerations**

The ethical considerations were obeyed in this study. Informed consent was obtained from the participants and was informed about the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of their participation, and their rights to withdraw from the study at any time. The confidentiality and anonymity of the participants was ensured by using codes to identify them instead of their names. The data collected was used solely for research purposes and was stored securely.

## CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.0. Introduction

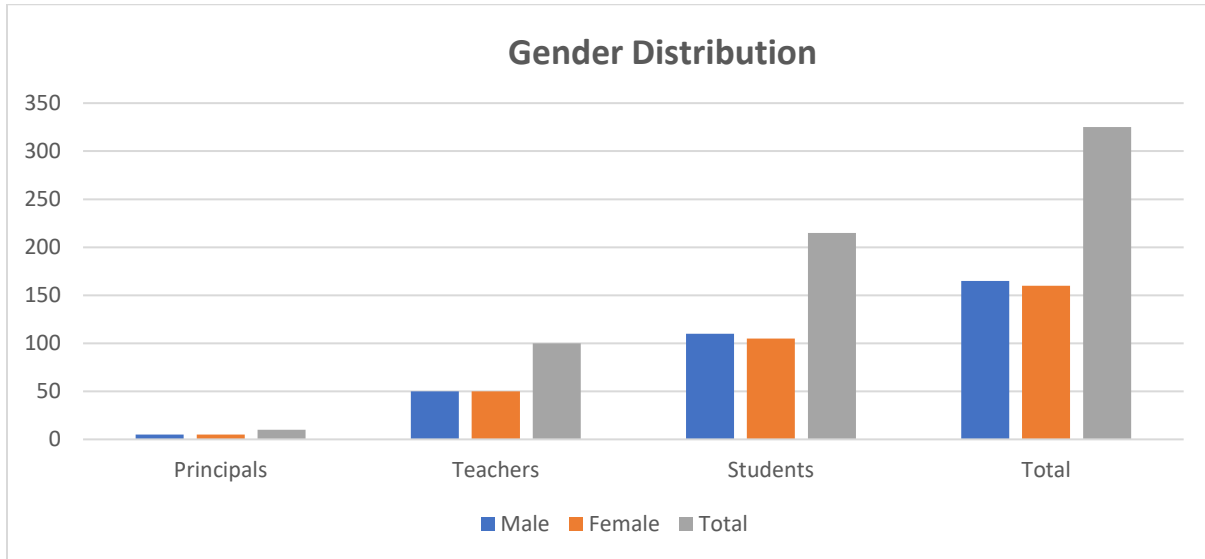
This chapter of the research addresses the findings, from the conducted study, analysis as well as interpreting the data.

### 4.1 Response rate



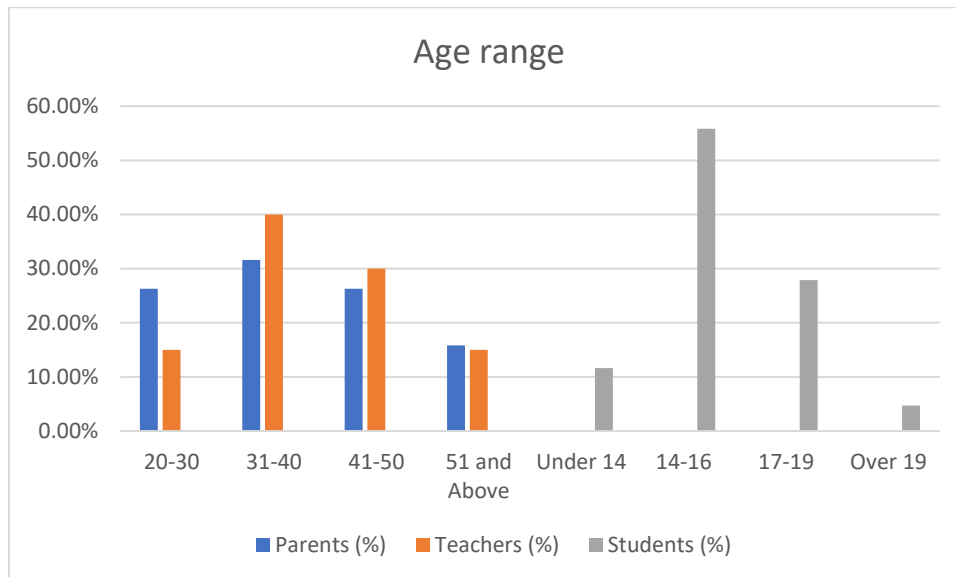
The response rate for the study is calculated as the percentage of respondents relative to the total target population for each group. For Principals, 9 out of 10 responded, resulting in a high response rate of 90%. Among Teachers, 85 out of 100 participated, giving a response rate of 85%. For Students, 182 out of 215 responded, which translates to a response rate of 84.7%. The overall response rate across all groups is 84.0%, indicating a strong level of engagement from the participants in the study. This data reflects good participation levels across the different groups, suggesting that the responses collected are representative of the target population for the study on school dropout causes in Thika sub-county, Kiambu county, Kenya.

## 4.2 Gender Distribution



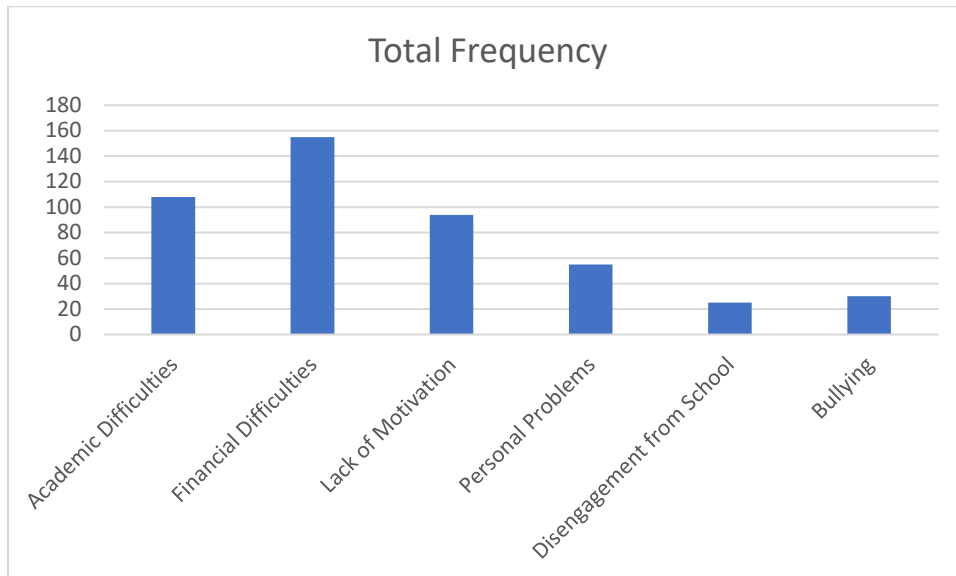
The gender distribution across principals, teachers, and students offers valuable insights for the study on school dropout among male students in Thika Subcounty, Kiambu County. Among principals, the gender balance is equal, with 5 males and 5 females, suggesting diverse perspectives in school leadership. Similarly, the teaching staff is evenly distributed, with 50 males and 50 females, indicating a balanced environment that can effectively address gender-specific challenges. Among students, there is a slight male majority, with 110 males compared to 105 females. This demographic detail is crucial for analyzing and addressing the factors contributing to higher dropout rates among male students. The balanced representation in leadership and teaching, combined with the slight male majority in the student body, underscores the importance of developing targeted strategies to support male students and reduce dropout rates effectively.

### 4.3 Age distribution



The age distribution of respondents reveals notable variations among the three groups. Parents are predominantly in the 31-40 and 41-50 age ranges, reflecting that most parents of secondary school students are in their middle ages. In contrast, Teachers are most commonly aged 31-40, with a significant presence also in the 41-50 age group, indicating a well-established and experienced teaching staff. Students, on the other hand, are primarily 14-16 years old, which corresponds with the expected age range for secondary school students. This distribution highlights that parents and teachers are generally older and more experienced, while students fall within the standard age range for secondary education.

#### 4.4 Relationship between Individual factors and school dropout



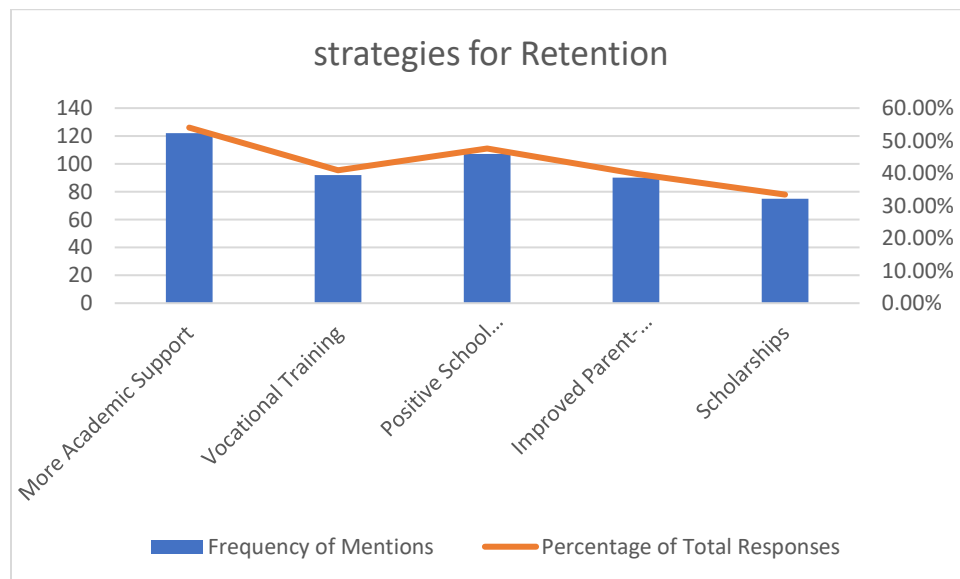
The Bar Chart for above provides a visual representation of the main individual factors contributing to school dropout among both male and female students in secondary schools. The chart consolidates responses from principals, teachers, parents, and students to identify the most significant factors leading to school dropout. Financial Difficulties is identified as the most prominent factor, with 155 mentions, making up 68.8% of the responses. This indicates that challenges such as school fees, purchasing supplies, and other educational expenses are the leading concerns for students and their families. The substantial impact of financial difficulties underscores the need for financial aid programs, scholarships, and support systems to alleviate these burdens and help students remain in school.

Following financial difficulties, Academic Difficulties emerges as a significant factor, with 108 mentions (48.4%). This factor reflects challenges such as poor academic performance, difficulty understanding lessons, and insufficient academic support as major reasons students may drop out. The high percentage of responses related to academic difficulties highlights the necessity for enhanced tutoring services, learning resources, and academic counseling to address these educational challenges. Additionally, Lack of Motivation, with 94 mentions (41.9%), is another crucial factor. This reflects issues such as students' disinterest in school, unclear educational goals,

and a lack of ambition, indicating a need for programs designed to engage students, set educational goals, and foster enthusiasm for learning.

The chart also shows that Personal Problems such as family conflicts and health issues were mentioned by 55 respondents (24.4%). This factor points to non-academic challenges that students face, suggesting a need for more comprehensive counseling services and support for students dealing with personal issues. Bullying and Disengagement from School are less frequently cited factors, with 30 (13.9%) and 25 (11.1%) mentions, respectively. Despite being less common, these issues still significantly impact students and indicate the need for effective anti-bullying policies and measures to increase student engagement and school involvement. Overall, the bar chart illustrates that while financial and academic difficulties are the primary concerns, addressing motivational issues, personal challenges, and school environment factors is also essential for reducing dropout rates among all students.

#### 4.4.1 Strategies for Retention



The analysis of the combined data from principals, teachers, parents, and students reveals a comprehensive picture of the main factors contributing to school dropout and the effective strategies for retention. The Bar Chart for Combined Data illustrates that financial difficulties are the most significant factor leading to school dropout, accounting for 68.8% of the responses. This is followed by academic difficulties at 48.4%, which indicates that both economic and educational



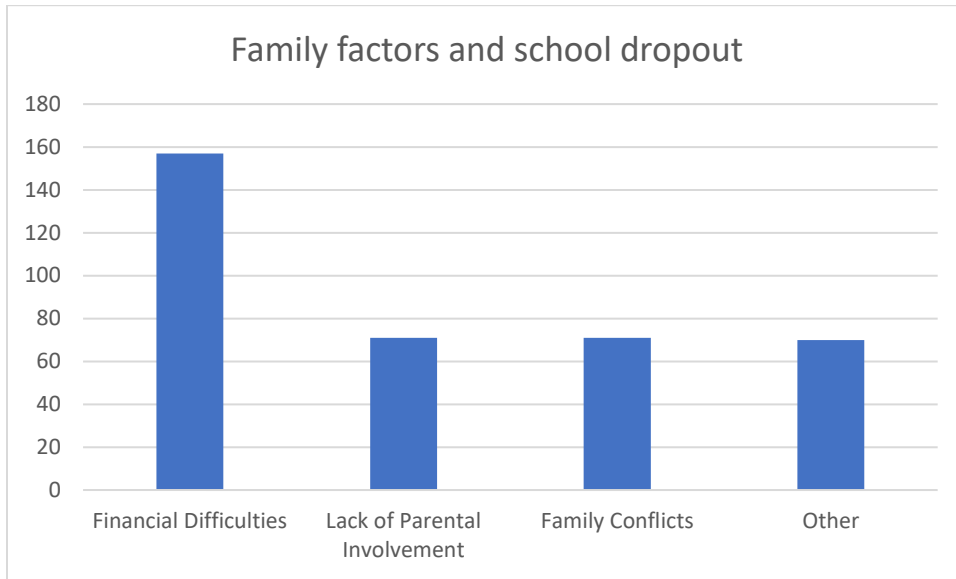
challenges are primary concerns. The data also highlights the impact of lack of motivation (41.9%) and personal problems (24.4%), with less emphasis on issues like bullying and disengagement from school, which, while less frequent, still contribute to dropout rates.

To combat these challenges, several key strategies have been identified. The most frequently suggested approach is More Academic Support (54.0% of the strategies), which includes tutoring, homework assistance, and additional learning resources aimed at addressing academic difficulties. Vocational Training is also highly recommended (40.9%), emphasizing the need for practical skills and career preparation to keep students engaged and motivated. Creating a Positive School Environment (47.6%) addresses issues such as bullying and personal problems by fostering a safe and supportive atmosphere. Additionally, Improved Parent-School Communication (39.8%) focuses on enhancing collaboration between families and schools to support students' academic and personal needs. Finally, Scholarships (33.4%) are proposed as a solution to financial difficulties, making education more accessible for students from low-income families.

These strategies reflect a multifaceted approach to tackling the dropout problem. Financial support through scholarships directly addresses economic barriers, while academic support and vocational training aim to improve students' educational experiences and future prospects. Creating a positive school environment and enhancing communication between parents and schools work to address personal and motivational issues, contributing to a more supportive and engaging school experience.

The combined data and strategies underscore the importance of a holistic approach to student retention. By addressing financial, academic, and personal factors, as well as improving the overall school environment, schools and communities can work together to reduce dropout rates and support students' educational success. The visual representations of these strategies—through bar and pie charts—highlight the relative importance of each approach, providing a clear foundation for targeted interventions and resource allocation to enhance student retention in secondary schools.

## 4.5 Family Factors Leading to Dropout



The analysis of family factors contributing to secondary school dropout among students reveals several key insights into the role that family dynamics play in educational outcomes. By examining responses from principals, teachers, parents, and students, we can understand the primary family-related issues that lead to students leaving school and explore effective strategies for addressing these challenges.

### 4.5.1 Financial Difficulties as the Primary Factor

Across all groups, Financial Difficulties emerge as the most significant factor contributing to school dropout. Principals (70.0%), teachers (50.0%), and parents (57.9%) overwhelmingly identify financial challenges as the leading issue. This finding underscores the critical role that economic barriers play in students' ability to continue their education. Financial difficulties can manifest as the inability to pay school fees, purchase necessary school supplies, or cover additional educational costs. For students, this issue is often compounded by the need to contribute to family income, which can further exacerbate dropout rates. The high frequency of mentions of financial difficulties reflects a broad consensus that addressing economic barriers is crucial for improving student retention.

#### **4.5.2 Impact of Lack of Parental Involvement**

Lack of Parental Involvement is also a significant concern, though less dominant than financial issues. This factor is noted by 20.0% of principals, 30.0% of teachers, 25.0% of parents, and 13.9% of students. The lack of parental involvement can include a range of issues such as parents being too busy to support their children's education, lack of awareness about school activities, or insufficient engagement in academic progress. This factor is seen as contributing to a lack of student motivation and support, which can lead to disengagement from school. Effective interventions might include increasing parental engagement through regular communication between schools and families, and creating programs that educate parents about their role in supporting their children's education.

#### **4.5.3 Family Conflicts as a Contributing Factor**

Family Conflicts are another noted factor, mentioned by 10.0% of principals, 20.0% of teachers, 15.8% of parents, and 20.9% of students. Conflicts within the family, such as disputes between family members or unstable home environments, can create emotional and psychological stress for students, negatively impacting their academic performance and school attendance. Family conflicts can also include issues such as domestic violence or substance abuse, which can make it difficult for students to focus on their studies. Addressing family conflicts requires a more nuanced approach, such as counseling services for students and families or community support programs aimed at stabilizing home environments.

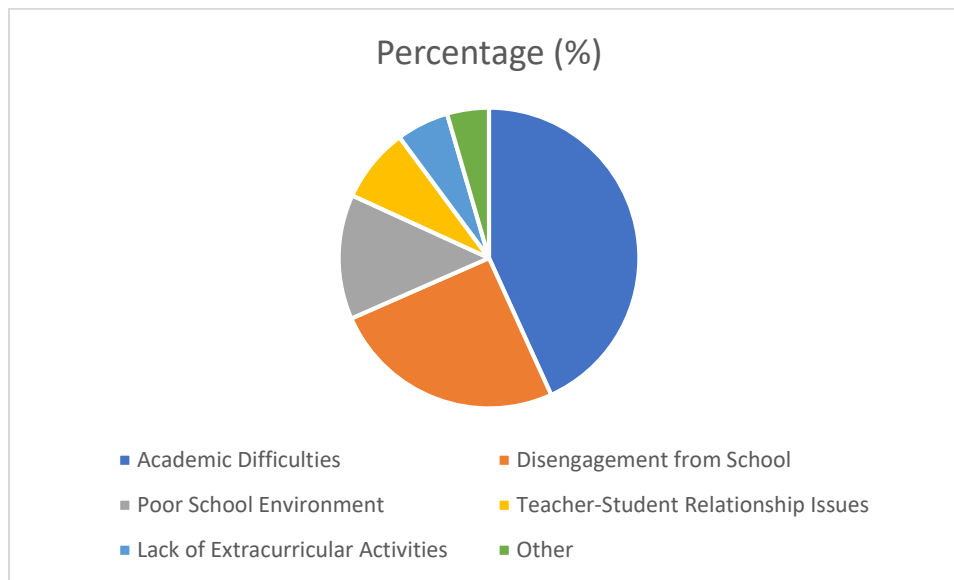
#### **4.5.4 Other Family Issues**

The Other category, which includes issues such as single-parent households or absentee parents, represents a significant proportion of the responses from students (32.6%). These issues can lead to a lack of supervision, emotional support, or financial stability. Addressing these problems involves creating support systems for students who may lack stable home environments, such as mentorship programs, after-school care, and community support initiatives.

#### **4.5.5 Summary of Strategies for Addressing Family Factors**

Financial support programs are pr Practical skills and career preparation to keep students engaged and motivated. Creating a Positive

#### 4.6 Relationship between school factors and school dropout



The analysis of school factors contributing to secondary school dropout shows that Academic Difficulties are the most significant factor, identified by 52.8% of all respondents. This finding reflects a broad concern about students' academic struggles, which can lead to frustration, lower performance, and ultimately, school dropout. Disengagement from School follows as the second most common factor, noted by 30.8% of respondents. This includes issues like lack of interest in school, feeling unchallenged, or perceiving school as irrelevant, which can lead to students disengaging from their education. Poor School Environment is also a notable factor, cited by 16.4% of respondents. This factor encompasses various issues such as a negative school atmosphere, inadequate facilities, or unsafe conditions, which can contribute to students' decision to leave school. Teacher-Student Relationship Issues and Lack of Extracurricular Activities are less frequently cited, with 9.8% and 6.9% of respondents identifying these factors, respectively. These issues can still impact student retention by affecting students' engagement and satisfaction with their school experience.

Other Factors represent 5.5% of responses and include a variety of less common issues. These might be specific to individual cases or less prominent than the primary factors.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1. Introduction**

This chapter summarizes the previous chapters' findings, the conclusions taken from the research findings, and the flaws discovered over the course of the investigation. The chapter includes recommendations for future research investigations that may be useful to future researchers

### **5.2 Summary**

The research aimed to identify the causes of school dropout among secondary school students in Thika sub-county, Kiambu county, Kenya. Data was collected from 9 principals, 85 teachers, and 182 students, yielding an overall response rate of 84.0%. The study revealed that dropout rates are influenced by a range of factors including academic difficulties, financial constraints, and personal issues such as family problems and health concerns. The key strategies identified for reducing dropout rates included providing academic support, enhancing vocational training, improving parental engagement, and offering community support.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

In conclusion, the research has revealed that school dropout among secondary school students in Thika sub-county is driven by a complex interplay of academic difficulties, financial constraints, and personal issues. Academic struggles, such as poor performance and inadequate support, are significant factors leading to dropout, while financial hardships make it difficult for students to continue their education. Personal problems, including family conflicts and health issues, also contribute to the high dropout rates. Additionally, student disengagement from school due to a lack of motivation or a negative school environment plays a crucial role. The study's findings underscore the need for a comprehensive approach to address these issues, including enhanced academic support, financial aid programs, counseling services, increased parental involvement, and community outreach initiatives. Effective implementation of these strategies can help create a supportive educational environment that addresses both the academic and socio-economic challenges faced by students. Future research should build on these findings to explore specific interventions and evaluate their effectiveness in reducing dropout rates and improving educational outcomes for students.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

To address the issue of school dropout, several key strategies are recommended based on the study's findings. Developing and expanding financial aid programs can alleviate the economic challenges faced by families, ensuring that financial constraints do not lead to students leaving school. Strengthening academic support systems through remedial programs and personalized tutoring can help students overcome academic difficulties and stay engaged in their education. Enhancing counseling services provides essential emotional and personal support for students and their families, addressing issues that might contribute to dropout. Promoting parental involvement through communication and educational workshops can strengthen the support system for students and encourage a positive educational environment. Community support programs can offer additional resources to families, addressing external challenges that impact students' ability to remain in school. Improving the school environment through extracurricular activities and a positive school culture fosters student motivation and engagement. Finally, implementing effective monitoring and evaluation frameworks ensures that dropout prevention strategies are continually assessed and refined for success. These recommendations provide a comprehensive approach to reducing dropout rates and supporting students in completing their education.

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