

Abstract

Transition to secondary schools in Kenya, retention and completion at Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) have remained below 100 percent contrary to Government's effort and desire. The low rate of transition from primary to secondary education indicates that goals of the Kenyan Government are not met, especially the Vision 2030. Hence, the purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between adequacy of teaching staff and implementation of free and compulsory education in Kitui County, Kenya. The study was founded on Liberal Educational Theory (LET) and used a descriptive study research design. The target population for the study was 655: 327 public day secondary school principals, 327 Parents Association chairpersons of those schools and Kitui County Director of Education (CDE). Data were collected from a sample of 182 respondents: 164 public day secondary school principals, 17 chairpersons of Parents' Associations (PAs) from amongst those schools as well as Kitui County Director of Education (CDE). The researchers used questionnaire to collect data from the principals while interview schedules were used to collect data from the CDE and PAs. Document review analysis was adopted to collect secondary data from the Kitui CDE's office. Qualitative data were analyzed on basis of emerging themes, while descriptive statistics were used to analyze quantitative data. Hypothesis testing was done using the product moment correlation coefficient method and at a significance level of .05. The study findings showed that there was a negative and significant ($r = -.722$; $p \leq .01$) relationship between teacher inadequacy and transition and completion rates. Considering the afore-stated results, the study made the conclusion that the indirect relationship between the study variables negatively affected the implementation of free and compulsory education within the public day secondary schools in the study area in particular and the whole of Kenya in general. On this basis, the study recommended that TSC should employ adequate number of teachers, a situation that would also reduce burden of charging salary levy on learners to engage Board of Management (BOM) teachers. Secondly, TSC should ensure quick replacement of teachers who leave the profession through natural attrition, to ensure effective unperturbed execution of the free and compulsory education in public schools. This would improve transition, retention and completion rates in the public day secondary schools in Kenya.