

## Preface

The improvement and expansion of higher education have been priorities of our national development in Kenya. Within a span of thirty five years since independence, we have witnessed the creation of five public universities. Several private universities have also been established. In our national universities, more professional programmes have been developed at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels and several departments now offer Ph.D programmes through research. As one of many African countries that have suffered from the effects of colonialism and marginalization, Kenya has made tremendous progress in the field of higher education that should be desired for the wider region, now defined by the Preferential Trade Area (PTA) and the Common Market of East and Southern Africa (COMESA). There has, however, been a constant lack of locally available textbooks for use at both the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Many departments continue to use imported textbooks at a great price in foreign exchange. Worse still, the teaching staff have to relate material in these texts to our local situation and experiences. With the onset of the third millennium and the ever-growing quest for information, there is a desperate need for people to write books in various areas of specialization that are relevant to our needs. One of the objectives of any institution of higher learning is to conduct research. Research generates new knowledge and information; it extends the frontiers of understanding as we gain new insights into phenomena. There can be no improvement of higher education without sound research. The Kenya Government has encouraged and supported research in our public universities and has gone further to establish independent research institutes in several disciplines. This is testimony to the important role that research plays in the national development of any country. It is with these points in mind that we set about the task of writing a book on research methods. Research methods as a subject cuts across the boundaries of all disciplines. Whether in History, Engineering, Medicine, Education or Literature, a researcher needs the necessary tools to conduct a research study properly. We sincerely believe that *Research Methods* compliments and strengthens the philosophy of our system of education by equipping the student or any aspiring researcher with the necessary tools and skills to identify a problem and look for practical solutions in a systematic way. Excellent research skills should also strengthen a person's ability to work, think and act independently. In writing this book, we felt a research methods book should be "skill" and "application" oriented. We have therefore tried to discuss thoroughly the necessary skills in research and how such skills should be applied when conducting a research study. This text is intended for people who will either conduct field research. Or who need to rely on literature research. It is therefore suitable for university students at both the undergraduate and graduate levels and for personnel in Government and Non-Governmental Organizations. University teaching staff should also find this book useful as a reference text for their research. The organization of the material in this text follows the format of the research process. Chapters 1 and 2 deal with the definition and purpose of research. Chapters 3-9 deal with the critical elements of the research process. Chapters 10 and 12 deal with types of research while Chapter 11 discusses logistical and ethical issues in research. Finally, research and project proposal development is discussed in Chapter 13. This chapter should be particularly helpful to students who are doing higher degrees and practitioners who may want to develop project proposals. There are review assignments at the end of each chapter to help in studying and revision. An example of a published journal paper is included in Appendix I. The journal article contains most of the components of a research report as discussed in Chapter 9. While the book lays great emphasis on quantitative research methods, it also gives an

introduction to qualitative approaches in Chapter 12. Information on qualitative approaches is also given under various topics throughout the text.