

**APPROACHES EMPLOYED BY SCHOOL MANAGERS TO  
ADDRESS SCHOOL DROPOUT RATES AMONG SECONDARY  
SCHOOL STUDENTS IN TIMAU WARD, MERU COUNTY, KENYA**

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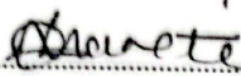
**E55/NKI/PT/23439/2012**

**A RESEARCH PROJECT PRESENTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT, POLICY AND CURRICULUM  
STUDIES IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF EDUCATION IN EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION -  
KENYATTA UNIVERSITY**

**DECEMBER, 2016**

## DECLARATION

I declare that this project is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university or any other institution of higher learning for certification. This research project has been complemented by referenced sources duly acknowledged. Where text, data, graphics, pictures or tables have been borrowed from other sources, including the internet, these are specifically accredited and references cited in accordance with anti-plagiarism regulations.

  
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We confirm that the work reported in this project was carried out by the candidate under our supervision as University Supervisors.


  
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## ABSTRACT

Dropout rates remain high in secondary schools, despite school-based measures taken by schools in Kenya. The purpose of this study was to investigate strategies put in place by school managers to address school dropout rates in secondary schools in Timau ward Meru County. The study was based on the following objectives to: establish school and family based factors affecting students' school attendance and completion; find out the challenges facing school managers on the implementation of school dropout reduction strategies among secondary school students. The study also determined the strategies employed by school managers to address school dropout rates and ensure completion among secondary school students. This study adopted the classical liberal theory of opportunity and social Darwinism. The theory asserts that each person is born with a given amount of capacity, which to a large extent is inherited and cannot be substantially changed. It also states that social mobility is promoted by equal opportunity of education. This study employed descriptive survey design in determining the effectiveness of the strategies employed by school managers to address school dropout rates in secondary schools. The target population for this study consisted of form three students and teachers/principals from all secondary Schools in Timau division of Meru County. The study applied stratified, purposive and simple random sampling. The sample size of teachers were 4 teachers for each of the 4 selected sample schools while for the students, ten percent ( $N=1260$ ) of the target students was selected with a cumulative sample size of ( $N=2505$ ) respondents. Questionnaires were used to collect data from teachers/head teachers and students. The study carried a pilot study to enable the researcher to improve on validity and reliability of the research instruments. Both quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed to get comprehensive data results. The school based factors included the availability of teaching and learning resources including school infrastructure; the curriculum, the availability of teachers and the school principals' administrative style and experience. The family based factors included: lack of school fees and to some extent family breakout and poverty, students also cited the influence of unreasonably strict parents who do not listen to the needs of their children. The major challenges included inadequate resource materials, inadequate space, irregular reporting and truancy for the students and lack of basic requirements for teaching and learning including uniforms though remotely. The major finding on methods used by school managers to reduce school dropout rates and ensure completion among secondary school students was to provide the best possible classroom instruction that inspires them to remain in school. The school principals also organized local school programs and ensured that their schools participate in national campaigns that focused on raising awareness of the importance of secondary school completion and tackle the challenges leading to student dropouts holistically. In conclusion, it is important to embrace early identification of poor attendance patterns of children and dropouts which are vital to ensuring a successful completion. This study therefore recommends that strategies that address the different learning styles of students should be implemented to increase the knowledge and skills of teachers, and harness the power of technology that can increase learning and attendance.