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**Influence of Family Structures on Students' Progression in Public
Secondary Schools in Ndhiwa Sub-County, Homabay County, Kenya**

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Abstract

Purpose: Students' progression in secondary schools is important in the realization of educational objectives. However, in Ndhiwa Sub-county, students' progression rates has been low in many public secondary schools. Many students drop out of secondary schools just a few years after enrollment. Thus, the purpose of this was to study to examine how family structures influence students' progression in public secondary schools in Ndhiwa Sub-county, Homabay County, Kenya.

Methodology: This research adopted mixed methodology and applied concurrent triangulation research design. Target population was 1263 respondents which comprised 65 principals, 678 secondary school teachers and 520 parents' representatives from which 305 respondents were sampled using Yamane's Formula. Stratified sampling was applied to create five strata based on the number of zones in Ndhiwa Sub-county. From each zone, five principals and five parents' representatives were sampled purposively. However, from each zone, simple random sampling was applied to select 51 teachers. This procedure realized a sample size of 25 principals, 25 parents' representatives and 255 teachers. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically based on the objectives and presented in narrative forms. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages and inferentially using multiple linear regression model in Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 23) and presented using tables.

Findings: The study established that students' progression has been low with many students who get enrolled in Form I not able to complete their secondary education. This is attributed to large family sizes and family structures.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy: As a practice, parents should plan their families and bring forth families they can comfortably take care of such that the meagre amount of financial resources available can cater for the education. As a policy, the Ministry of Health and the Division of National Family Planning should continue with their efforts to teach people on the essence of bring forth families they can manage. The study's unique contribution is that it will reinforce an understanding of how specific aspects of each family structure influence of students' progression in public secondary schools.

Keywords: *Family Structures, Students' Progression, Public Secondary Schools*

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INTRODUCTION

Every child has a right to education and this has seen great expansion in the implementation of different curricula and education systems worldwide. Muralidharan and Prakash (2013) assert that such demands have seen the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) whose main pillar is to see countries work towards the realization of universal primary and secondary education by 2030. Cognizant of this fact, Muralidharan and Prakash (2013) posit that education systems have developed different initiatives to ensure that secondary schools realize high students' participation rates through improved effective students' progression in secondary schools. Bishop (2014) posits that students' progression entails students' enrollment, attendance, transition, completion and ensuring that students perform in their internal and national examinations. However, in many instances, this has not been the case, with the progression of students from enrollment to completion being on a declining trend.

In Mexico, for example, Cisneros-Chernour, Cisneros and Moreno (2013) assert that, despite the expansion of education systems and introduction of education curriculum geared towards ensuring the realization of Education For All, the number of students who enroll and complete their secondary education is still, alarmingly, low at 23.9%. In Colombia, the rate of flow of students in secondary schools has been on the decline. For example, a report by Woessmann (2020) shows that, in 2015, students' participation rates in secondary schools in Austria stood at 67.9%, in 2016, it dropped to 64.9%, in 2017, it was 59.4%, in 2018, it was 57.8% whereas, in 2019, the rate stood at 55.1%. This points to the fact that the issue of students' progression in secondary schools is a global problem confronting the education industry around the world as countries seek to stem inefficiency which leads to wastage. Despite all these observations, the extent to which family structures as a socio-economic dynamic, influence students' progression in secondary schools is yet to be fully explored.

The contemporary trends in family structures in the last decades have led to a sharp decline in the traditional forms of families and a rise in new family forms globally which include; polygamous, monogamous, blended, and child-headed and single-parent families. In a survey conducted in the United States of America, Coontz (2012) notes that, among different forms of American families, established that one-third of the students in secondary schools experience the remarriage of one or both of their parents and 62% of remarriages end up divorce. Coontz (2012) asserts that such shifts in the composition of family life could have effects on students' progression in secondary schools.

An examination from the World Family Chart (2014) recommends that youngsters are especially anticipated that they would live with two parents and distant relatives in Asia and the Middle East. In North America, Oceania and Europe, a wide minority of around one-fifth of children live in a single-parent family structure and less than 7% of children live in family structures with at least one of their parents. In Eastern Europe, 11-15% of children live with single parents. In these areas, the United States 27%, the United Kingdom 24% and New Zealand 24% have prevalently elevated structures of single parenthood. Various European nations have foreseen the degree of children living with single parents to grow through 2030 (OECD, 2011). Students from such families exhibit instances of low enrollment, school attendance, socio-emotional maladjustment and poor cognitive development. These findings affirm the fact different family structures have deleterious effects on students' progression in schools' academic activities.

In keeping with these viewpoints, in a study carried out in Brazil, Booth and Paul (2013) established that, over the past two decades or so, significant literature has developed on the impact of family structure and family change on student well-being. Booth and Paul (2013) indicated that students raised in different family contexts display differential patterns of outcomes across a wide range of developmental domains. In particular, they noted that students raised in normal families have been found, on average, to do less well across a range of measures of well-being than their peers in two-parent families, while parental separation is associated with an array of adverse outcomes for students and the rate at which they drop out of school.

In the United Kingdom, Benokraitis (2012) observed that students of divorced parents who subsequently cohabited with another man fared significantly more poorly on literacy tests than students of continuously married parents. Benokraitis (2012) further observed that during the early years, divorce has negative consequences for students such as behavioral adjustment, attachment security, parent-reported academic difficulties, emotional well-being and sociability. These findings thus affirm the fact that different dimensions of family structures namely the marital status of a mother, presence of the father and polygyny impact students' progression to school and eventual academic performance. According to Benokraitis (2012), family structures are major vehicles in the socialization of a student. In most countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, the scenario is similar with many students who belong to different personality traits (Bequele, 2010).

In a study conducted in South Africa, Bower (2013) indicates that students from different family structures exhibited different forms of personality traits. Bower (2013) found out that students from divorced families had more adjustment problems following a family disruption. The loss of contact with the parents could account for such a difference. In Kenya, family and marriage relations gradually changing in response to the changing social and economic environment (Ayieko, 2013). In this regard, indigenously favored family systems are eroding, either through complete abandonment or evolution into more viable forms that are conventional with modern Kenya. This has had net effect on students' participation in secondary school activities. In other words, students' enrollment rates in public secondary schools have been on an upward trajectory. For example, a report by the Ministry of Education (2020) shows that students' enrollment into secondary schools have increased tremendously courtesy of the government's 100.0% transition policy as shown in Table 1:

Table 1: Students' Progression Rates in Kenya from 2015 to 2019

Year	Students' Enrollment Rates (%)
2015	68.1
2016	70.9
2017	76.2
2018	81.5
2019	89.3

Source: Ministry of Education (2023)

However, in Ndhiwa Sub-county, a study carried out by Onyango (2017) established that students' progression in secondary schools has had numerous challenges. According to Onyango (2017), of all the students enrolled in secondary school in Ndhiwa Sub-county, only 16.9% complete their secondary school education. In other words, the dropout rates among students in Ndhiwa Sub-county are high at 48.1%. Another study carried by Adero (2018)

revealed that, in 2015, 4567 students were enrolled in secondary schools in Ndhiwa Sub-county. Despite this, those who completed their education were only 24.8% with those who completed registering low academic grades in the national examination. On the same note, a report by the Ministry of Education (2020) shows that public secondary schools in Ndhiwa Sub-county have registered a decreasing trend in students' progression with regard to enrollment and eventual completion of their secondary education as shown in Table 2:

Table 2: Students' Progression Rates in Ndhiwa Sub-County from 2015 to 2019

Year	Students' Enrollment Rates (%)	Students' Dropout Rates (%)
2015	58.3	13.9
2016	60.7	15.3
2017	69.4	17.5
2018	73.7	19.8
2019	77.9	24.8

Source: Ministry of Education (2023)

Table 2 shows that there is an increase in the number of students who drop out of secondary school despite the increase in enrollment. This has been attributed to a number of socio-economic dynamics such as family structures. Ndhiwa Sub-county with school-going children come from different family structures with a recognition of the fact that family structures play a key role in advanced academic attainment, less conduct issue, and better health results (Okoko, 2012). A study carried out in Homabay County by Owino and Kurgat (2014) established that the most common family structures are monogamy, polygamy, blended, child-headed and single-parenthood. The study found that, although most youngsters still live in wedded groups of both parents, the extent has declined after some time with most students living in single-parent family structures. However, much still needs to be done to interrogate how different family structures influence students' progression in secondary schools.

Statement of the Problem

Students' progression in secondary schools is key to the realization of educational objectives. However, in Ndhiwa Sub-county, students' progression in secondary schools facing numerous challenges. As noted earlier, Onyango (2017) revealed that, of all the students enrolled in secondary schools in Ndhiwa Sub-county, only 16.9% complete their secondary school education with high cases of school dropouts at 48.1%. Adero (2018) also noted that, in 2015, 4567 students were enrolled in secondary schools in Ndhiwa Sub-county. However, those who completed their form four were only 24.8% and with low academic grades in examination. MoE (2020) also noted that public secondary schools in Ndhiwa Sub-county have registered a decreasing trend in students' progression with regard to enrollment and eventual completion of their secondary education. Efforts to mitigate these challenges such as recruitment of new teachers and transfers of principals have not yielded much remarkable progress. Despite this state of affairs, much still needed to be done to interrogate the extent to which family structures influence students' progression in secondary schools.

Objectives of the Study

The study was guided by the following objectives:

- i. To assess the status of students' progression in public secondary schools in Ndhiwa Sub-county.
- ii. To examine the influence of family structures on students' progression in secondary schools in Ndhiwa Sub-county;

Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by the socio-economic theory which was postulated by Palkovitz (2010). This theory holds that socioeconomic status is determined by one's family size and structure, social status and social class. In the context of this study, this theory associates diverse inputs affecting a student's learning and participation in school academic activities with socio-economic dynamics such as family structures with measured outputs including subsequent transit from one level of education to the next, class attendance, graduation rates and standardized examination results. Thus, the relevance of socio-economic theory in this study is that it underscores the fact that children who are subjected to or are victims of early marriage fail to accomplish their academic activities. In other words, early marriages are major determinants of students' dropout rates from secondary schools.

This study was also guided by the theory of student participation by Tinto and Cullen (1993) and the central idea to it is that of integration. It claims that whether a student persists or drops out is quite strongly predicted by their degree of academic integration and social integration. These evolve, as integration and commitment interact, with dropouts depending on commitment at the time of the decision. Tinto and Cullen (1993) have categorized students' education theories into three types: psychological, environmental, and interactional. In this study, students' access to educational opportunities and eventual progression in secondary schools depends largely on different family structures which students come from.

Research Gaps

Family structures play a key role in students' progression in public secondary schools. For example, a study conducted by Okoko (2012) in Ndhiwa District revealed that students come from different family structures. Another study carried out in Homabay County by Owino and Kurgat (2014) also found that family structures include monogamy, polygamy, blended, child-headed and single-parenthood and, although most youngsters still live in wedded groups of both parents, the extent has declined after some time with most students living in single-parent family structures.

However, Owino and Kurgat (2014), just as many reviewed empirical studies, fail to interrogate how each form of family structure influences students' progression in secondary schools. These were the research gaps which this study sought to address.

METHODOLOGY

The study applied mixed methodology and thus adopted concurrent triangulation design. Target population was 1263 respondents which comprised 65 principals, 678 secondary school teachers and 520 parents' representatives from which 305 respondents were sampled using Yamane's Formula. Stratified sampling was applied to create five strata based on the number of zones in Ndhiwa Sub-county. From each zone, five principals and five parents' representatives were sampled purposively. However, from each zone, simple random sampling was applied to select 51 teachers. This procedure realized a sample size of 25 principals, 25 parents' representatives and 255 teachers. Questionnaires were used to collect data from teachers and interview guides from principals and parents' representatives. Qualitative data

were analyzed thematically based on the objectives and presented in narrative forms. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages and inferentially using multiple linear regression model in Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 23) and presented using tables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section presents the findings of the study based on the objective. It also outlines the methods of presentation of the study findings and discussions.

Response Rates

In this study, 255 questionnaires were administered to teachers and, in return, 239 questionnaires were filled and returned. The researcher also interviewed 21 principals and 23 parents' representatives. This yielded response rates shown in Table 3;

Table 3: Response Rates

Respondents	Sampled Respondents	Those Who Participated	Achieved Return Rate (%)
Principals	25	21	84.0
Teachers	255	239	93.7
Parents' representatives	25	23	92.0
Total	305	283	92.8

Source: Field Data (2023)

Table 3 shows that principals registered a response rate of 84.0%, teachers registered 93.7% whereas parents' representatives registered a response rate of 92.0%.

This yielded an average response rate of 92.8%, which is consistent with the assertions of Creswell (2014) that a response rate above 75.0% is adequate. This information was important since it allowed the researcher to generalize the study outcomes to the target population.

Status of Students' Progression in Public Secondary Schools

The study sought to assess the status of students' progression in public secondary schools in Ndhiwa Sub-county. This was measured by taking stock of the number of students who were enrolled between 2016 and 2019, those who completed their secondary education and those who dropped out. The findings are presented in Table 4;

Table 4: Status of Students' Progression in Public Secondary Schools

Academic Year	Status of Students' Progression		
	Number of Students Enrolled in Form I	Number of Students who Complete Form IV	Number of Students who Dropped Out of School
2016	2199	1642(2016-2019 Cohort)	557 (25.3%)
2017	2303	1612(2017-2020 Cohort)	691 (30.0%)
2018	2511	1834(2018-2021 Cohort)	677 (27.0%)
2019	3009	2306(2019-2022 Cohort)	703 (23.4%)
Totals	10022	7394	2628 (26.2%)

Source: Field Data (2023)

Table 4 shows that the number of students enrolled in Form I in public secondary schools has been on the increase since 2016 to 2019 due to the 100.0% transition policy by the government.

However, after four years upon enrollment, the number of students who complete their secondary education is low. These findings corroborate the findings of a study conducted in Ndhiwa Sub-county by Onyango (2017) which revealed that, of all the students enrolled in secondary schools, only 16.9% complete their secondary school education with high cases of school dropouts at 48.1%. A report by the MoE (2020) also shows that public secondary schools in Ndhiwa Sub-county have registered a decreasing trend in students' progression with regard to enrollment and eventual completion of their secondary education. These findings underscore the fact that students are enrolled into secondary schools, however, not all progress to completion of their secondary education. Despite the concerted efforts by the government and other stakeholders in secondary education, the number of students who drop out has been consistently between 20.0-30.0%. This affirms the fact that the noble expectations of education have not been achieved in situations where the students' progression has been low and thus, leads to wastage. In other words, students' progression in secondary schools has been and continues to be a critical issue confronting education system in most developing countries.

Family Structures and Students' Progression in Public Secondary Schools

The study sought to examine the influence of family structures on students' progression in public secondary schools. The findings are shown in Table 5;

Table 5: Teachers' Views on the Influence of Family Structures on Students' Progression in Public Secondary Schools

Test Items	Ratings				
	SA %	A %	U %	D %	SD %
In public secondary schools, few students come from single-parent families which usually affects their participation in academic activities	49.4	5.0	4.6	33.9	7.1
In public secondary schools, monogamy is the most common form of family structure and students from such families regularly take part in academic activities	52.7	12.1	2.9	26.4	5.9
In public secondary schools, students from polygamous families usually have psychosocial challenges which make it difficult for them to participate in academic activities	44.4	15.9	4.2	28.9	6.7
Public secondary schools have students who head families and usually experience challenges taking part in academic activities	59.8	7.9	5.4	21.3	5.4
Despite coming from different families, students still participate in academic activities in secondary schools	54.8	8.8	3.8	26.8	5.9

Source: Field Data (2023)

Table 5 shows that 118(49.4%) of the teachers strongly agreed with the view that few students come from single-parent families which usually affects their participation in academic activities whereas 12(5.0%) agreed, 11(4.6%) were undecided, 81(33.9%) disagreed whereas 17(7.1%) strongly disagreed. These findings are consistent with the findings of a study carried out by the World Family Chart (2014) found that, in North America, Oceania and Europe, a wide minority of around one-fifth of children live in a single-parent family structure and less than 7% of children live in family structures with at least one of their parents. According to

World Family Chart (2014), in Eastern Europe, 11-15% of children live with single parents. In these areas, the United States 27%, the United Kingdom 24% and New Zealand 24% have prevalently elevated structures of single parenthood. These findings also corroborate the assertions of OECD (2011) that various European nations have foreseen the degree of children living with single parents to grow through 2030. OECD (2011) noted that students from such families exhibit instances of low enrollment, school attendance, socio-emotional maladjustment and poor cognitive development.

A study carried out in Homabay County by Owino and Kurgat (2014) also revealed that, although most youngsters still live in wedded groups of both parents, the extent has declined after some time with most students living in single-parent family structures. These findings affirm the fact single-parenthood has deleterious effects on students' progression in schools' academic activities. Children from such families always experience emotional challenges and more adjustment problems, which sometimes make them avoid attending to their secondary school activities. Most, 126(52.7%), of the teachers strongly agreed that monogamy is the most common form of family structure and students from such families regularly take part in academic activities whereas 29(12.1%) agreed, 7(2.9%) were undecided, 63(26.4%) disagreed whereas 14(5.9%) strongly disagreed. This supports the findings of a study carried out in Brazil in which Booth and Paul (2013) established that students raised in normal families have been found, on average, to do well across a range of measures of well-being than their peers in two-parent families, while parental separation is associated with an array of adverse outcomes for students and the rate at which they drop out of school. This implies that availability of both parents is paramount in promoting students' psychological well-being necessary to ensure that they attend school activities and complete their studies.

The study also revealed that 106(44.4%) of the teachers strongly agreed with the view that students from polygamous families usually have psychosocial challenges which make it difficult for them to participate in academic activities while 38(15.9%) were in agreement. However, 10(4.2%) were undecided, 69(28.9%) disagreed whereas 16(6.7%) strongly disagreed. This supports the findings of a study conducted in South Africa in which Bower (2013) noted that students come from different families such as polygamy. Strong et al (2011) posit that changes in family structures have had impacts on learning outcomes of students in secondary schools given that this is the period of discovery and identity formation. These findings indicate that polygamy has had its effects on how often children undertake their academic programs owing to competition for scarce resources in such family arrangements, thus, compromising students' academic progression.

More than half, 143(59.8%) of the teachers strongly agreed with the view that public secondary schools have students who head families and usually experience challenges taking part in academic activities while 19(7.9%) agreed, 13(5.4%) were undecided, 51(21.3%) disagreed whereas 13(5.4%) strongly disagreed. These findings blend credence to the assertions of Ayieko (2013) that family and marriage relations in Kenya are gradually changing in response to the changing social and economic environment and, in this regard, indigenously favored family systems are eroding, either through complete abandonment or evolution into more viable forms that are conventional with modern Kenya, where young children head families in the absence of their real or foster parents. This implies instances of children heading families have become a common phenomenon in many parts of Kenya including Ndhwa in Homabay County. Such children sometimes miss school and, in extreme cases, abandon secondary education since they get tied up with domestic chores and looking after their younger siblings.

Majority, 131(54.8%), of the teachers strongly agreed with the view that, despite coming from different families, students still participate in academic activities in public secondary schools while 21(8.8%) agreed, 9(3.8%) were undecided, 64(26.8%) disagreed whereas 14(5.9%) strongly disagreed. These findings contradict the findings of a study carried out in the United Kingdom where Benokraitis (2012) observed that students of divorced parents who subsequently cohabited with another man fared significantly more poorly on literacy tests than students of continuously married parents. Benokraitis (2012) further observed that during the early years, divorce has negative consequences for students such as behavioral adjustment, attachment security, parent-reported academic difficulties, emotional well-being and sociability. These findings thus affirm the fact that different dimensions of family structures namely the marital status of a mother, presence of the father and polygyny impact students' progression to school and eventual academic performance.

Inferential Analysis

To verify the influence of family structures on students' progression in public secondary schools, data were collected on the average family size of parents whose children attend the 21 sampled public secondary schools and the number of students who dropped out of public secondary schools between 2017 and 2021. The results are shown in Table 6:

Table 6: Average Family Size and the Number of Students Who Dropped Out of Public Secondary Schools (2017-2021)

Average Family Size	Number of Students who Dropped out of Public Secondary Schools
9	140
7	139
5	114
4	138
4	136
9	179
8	130
7	123
5	71
9	115
7	106
3	69
6	61
5	125
3	71
8	146
5	113
8	143
7	135
9	138
7	72

Source: Field Data (2023)

Table 6 shows that, in Ndhiwa Sub-county, the average family sizes range between 3 and 9 members which have influence on progression of children in secondary schools. It is evident

that the larger the family size, the higher the dropout cases. These results further corroborate the findings of Bower (2013) that students come from different families with different number of members and affects children's participation in secondary school programmes. The results in Table 6 were subjected to Linear Regression Analysis and the results are shown in Table 7:

Table 7: Relationship between Family Structures and Students' Progression in Public Secondary Schools

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	61.936	20.620		3.004	.007
	Family Structures	8.617	3.071	.541	2.806	.011

a. Dependent Variable: Number of Students who Drop out of Public Secondary Schools

Table 7 shows linear regression analysis which generated a linear model of the form; **Number of students who drop out of public secondary schools = 61.936 + 0.541Average family size.** From the linear regression analysis, the coefficient for number of students who drop out of public secondary schools attributed to whether parental income is 0.541. This indicates that for every increase in the number of family members, the number of students who drop out of public secondary schools is expected to increase by a factor of 0.541. The value 61.936 indicates that the number of students who drop out of public secondary schools does not only rely on family structure or size, but on other factors. Table 7 also shows that the p-value, 0.011 is less than 0.05, that is, a low p-value ($0.011 < 0.05$) which further indicate that there is significant influence of family structures on students' progression.

Thematic Analysis

During the interviews, principals and parents' representatives also stated that cases of single-parenthood are on the rise with net negative effect on students' participation in secondary school programmes. Parents' representative, PR1, observed;

In Ndhiwa Sub-county, there are very many cases of single-parent families. There are many divorce or separation cases, teenage pregnancy and widowhood which render many children to belong to single-parenthood. This has often them to an extent where they abandon their education.

This view was supported by the principals who also stated that cases of single-parenthood have bene on the rise. Principal, P1, stated;

I have had to handle many cases of students failing to come to go to school and reasons are often attributed to conflicts at home. Either their parents separated or divorced leaving them traumatized. In some instances, some students stay with either their mother or father because one parent passed on. Sometimes reconciling these issues become a problem to children who end up abandoning their academic programmes midway.

These views indicate that single-parenthood is a major cause of secondary school dropouts. Despite these findings, the interviewees noted that monogamy is the most common form of family structure and students from such families regularly take part in academic activities. The interviewees affirmed;

Despite the changes in the contemporary family arrangements, monogamy is still the most common form of families practised by many people and many students from such families have had fewer instances of school dropouts.

From these views, it is evident that both quantitative and qualitative findings attest to the fact that availability of both parents is paramount in promoting students' psychological well-being necessary to ensure that they attend school activities and complete their studies. On polygamous family structures, both the principals and parents' representatives indicated that polygamy is still practised with many students from such families exhibiting psychosocial challenges which make it difficult for them to participate in academic activities. They affirmed;

Many people still practise polygamy. However, many children such families usually experience a lot of hardships since there is competition for limited resources

From these verbatims, polygamy has had its effects on how often children undertake their academic programmes owing to competition for scarce resources in such family arrangements, thus, compromising students' academic progression. On child-headed families, the principals and parents' representatives noted that such cases are common and students from such family structures usually experience challenges taking part in academic activities. Principal, P2, noted;

In my secondary school, I have orphaned students who play both the role of parents to their younger siblings. Sometimes, they miss school to go and look for jobs to do to fend for their younger brothers and sisters.

Parents' representatives echoed similar views as principals that cases of child-headed family arrangements. Parents' representative, PR2, stated;

In my village, we have had children who have been orphaned and the elder brothers and sisters have had to assume the roles of parents taking care of their younger siblings. This has compromised their participation in academic activities in schools since they sometimes have to miss school to take care of their young ones.

These views are indicative of the extent to which child-headed family structures negatively affect students' progression in secondary schools. In summary, these mixed findings affirm the fact that secondary school students come from different family structures which have various effects on students' progression.

Summary of Findings and Conclusions

From the study findings, it is evident that students' progression in many public secondary schools in Ndhiwa Sub-county has been on a downward trend with cases of dropouts being on the rise. After four years after enrollment, the number of students who complete their secondary education is low, that is, not all enrolled students complete their secondary education due to early marriages. It is also evident that students in public secondary schools come from either monogamous, single-parent, polygamous or children headed family structures. These have had influence students' progression at different levels. The study found that a fair number of students are from single-parent families which has affected their participation in academic activities. This is because such students always experience emotional challenges and more adjustment problems, which sometimes make them avoid attending to their secondary school activities. However, whichever form of family structure a student comes from, there is a net negative effect on their progression within secondary schools.

Recommendations

The study recommends that, as a practice, parents should plan their families and bring forth families they can comfortably take care of such that the meagre amount of financial resources available can cater for the education of their children in secondary schools. As a policy, the Ministry of Health and the Division of National Family Planning should continue with their efforts to teach people on the essence of bring forth families they can manage. The key contribution of the study is that it will reinforce an understanding of how specific aspects of each family structure influence of students' progression in public secondary schools.

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