

# Factors That Contributes To Repetition In Secondary Schools In Meru South Sub County, Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya

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**Abstract:** *The study adopted descriptive survey research design to establish factors contributing to Repetition in Secondary Schools in Meru South Sub-County, Tharaka Nithi County. The population was 380 teachers and 2653 Form Three students in 44 secondary schools. The study employed stratified random sampling, proportionate sampling and simple random sampling to obtain a sample size of 85 teachers and 151 students Data collected was coded and analyzed by the use of descriptive statistics namely; frequency counts, percentages and means facilitated by the statistical package for social science (SPSS) version 11.5 for windows. It was established that the factors contributing to repetition were poor academic performance, pregnancy, forcing students to repeat, substance abuse and failure to pay other school levies. The study recommends: Building of information systems that can pinpoint students at risk of repeating, in service programs for teachers, investing in reducing class size and student: counselor ratio, Initiation and development of a mix of communication channels.*

**Keywords:** *Repetition, students, Secondary schools, Meru South, Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Internal inefficiency in terms of repetition undermines not only the attainment of education for all goals, but also the process of national development. Repeaters are considered a wastage because they do not complete their cycle of education on to meet societal needs (Olwenya, 1996). School wastage, which is derived from repetition and dropout rates, can constitute an important obstacle to the realization of the goal of education for all (EFA) due to inefficiency in resource utilization. The inefficient use of school resources has a significant impact on the country's economy as the presence of large numbers of repeaters can prevent other eligible children from accessing school (Bray, Clarke & Stephens, 1986). They assert that repetition increases the number of pupils per class leading to higher schooling cost. According to UNESCO (1998) When pupils leave school before the end of the term or the final grade of school (drop out), they are less likely to have obtained basic competencies, including literacy and numeracy skills, resource used on these pupils are wasted. Thus, instead of dropouts and repeaters becoming instruments

of production and hence adding to the national wealth, they drain the national resources (Bakhshi, 1971).

Following introduction of FSE, there is high enrolment in Form One, especially in day schools, where there is virtually no fees payment unlike boarding schools, where one may pay up to Sh18, 000 ( United Nations , 2008). However, some parents might consider it better to transfer their children to boarding schools for more quality education and the subsequent influx of students will not immediately coincide with an equivalent expansion of classrooms, addition of desks, teaching staff and other facilities. This inadequacy of facilities may contribute to the dissatisfaction of education consumers and lead to increased school dropout rates. According to the Ministry of Education, there has been a decline in the GER over the last decade and an estimated dropout rate of 30 % (Republic of Kenya, 2005). However data on repetition rate was not available as repetition has been banned in schools.

Studies carried out in Africa, Europe and America on educational wastage has focused on three major areas: students' characteristics (Chapman, 1996) institutional characteristics and social economic and traditional factors

(Olwenya, 1996). The relevancy and applicability of related research to the context of secondary schools in Meru South Sub County has not been established. This study sought to identify specific factors contributing to repetition in secondary schools in Meru South Sub County, Tharaka Nithi County Kenya.

The Government of Kenya, individuals and private organizations have invested a lot of resources in the education sector with an objective of achieving the goals of education for all through free secondary education (FSE) by the year 2015. However, according to the Ministry of Education, the education sector experience wastage characterized by dropout of up to 30% and repetition (Republic of Kenya, 2005). Wastage leads to internal inefficiency of school systems influencing negatively on Kenya's economy. Persistent wastage in form of dropout and repetition is an indication that there are underlying factors, which require to be explored through systematic study. This study sought to determine factors contributing to repetition in secondary schools in Meru South Sub County, Tharaka Nithi County.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to IIEP (1989), repetition rate refers to the proportion of students in a grade, who for various reasons repeat the same grade the following year. Repetition rate is an indicator of internal efficiency (Kiveu & Mayio, 2009; Chiuru & Kiumi, 2005). According to Bray *et al* (1986), repetition constitutes inefficiency as repeaters occupy places, which could have been taken up by other students and use resources more than once before progressing. Lockheed (1991) asserts this view when he writes that grade repetition has adverse effects as it lowers a schools capacity to admit new students, besides it also creates overcrowded classroom environments and increases opportunity cost. Repeating a class increases private and public costs of education shouldered by individual parents and the state. It also leads to large classes with problems of assessment and supervision of students; more facilities are needed for the construction and equipping of new classrooms, training and recruiting more teachers as well as providing additional didactic materials. Repeating a class also delays the socio-economic integration of youths in the productive system of a nation and consequently, slows down economic and social development (Epah, 2004).

According to an assessment by UNESCO (2005) on challenges, facing the implementation of free primary education (FPE) in Kenya the proportion of repeaters is high and this contradicts the official regulation that outlaws repetition. A study conducted by Kiveu and Mayio (2009), identified that poor performance, absenteeism, pregnancy, illness, inadequate facilities, transfers, indiscipline, death and school fee lead repetition hence contributing to internal inefficiency. This study sought to determine if these factors contribute to wastage in form of repetition in secondary schools in Meru South Sub County.

An analysis of the trend of internal efficiency of the Nepalese primary education in 1998 indicated low levels (UNESCO, 1998). The study found out that rural area where agriculture was the only source of income with low literacy

rates and poor family income had low internal efficiency due to high dropout and repetition rates. High pockets of internal efficiency were urban areas with businesspersons, teachers, and better schools with facilities and community with high literacy levels. The study established that school, student and government related factors caused low internal efficiency. Many students from disadvantaged communities, remote area dwellers and poverty-stricken areas could not study well and as a result repeated grades and ultimately dropped out. Due to high failure rates in the various grades, most of the pupils became overage for the particular grade, these pupils felt humiliated and dropped out of school.

A study carried by Ajayi and Mbah (2008) in Nigerians Ekitti state on the causes of dropout in primary schools, pointed out that total number of pupils enrolled in primary one for the academic session do not usually graduate from the primary school due to frequent absenteeism and repetition. This is due to many school age children engaging in petty trading, street hawking, farming and babysitting during school hours. The study also observed that children repeat due to poor academic performance from long absenteeism while others dropout of school, this study sought to determine whether these factors contribute to dropout and repetition in secondary schools in Meru South Sub County.

According to Epah (2004), the phenomenon of high repetition is experienced in many third world countries and is an indicator of inefficiency of the education system. He states that repetition in Cameroon is as high as 40 % indicating inefficiency in terms of cost and constitutes wastage. He concludes that repetition increases private and public costs of education and in addition leads to large classes with problems of attendant, assessment and supervision. More facilities are required and more teachers are to be recruited. The findings of this study sought to establish measures that could be put in place in secondary schools in Meru South Sub County to reduce educational wastage.

According to Kotwal *et al* (2007) parents interviewed indicated that due to family circumstances, they had to engage their girls in household chores. In addition, due to poor economic conditions, they had to work in fields and industries and so the girls had to help in the household activities. The attitude regarding education of girl child was negative. Other causes of dropout according to the study were lack of immediate gain from education, need of girls at farms and pastureland and discouraging school environment. This study seeks to find out whether schools in Meru South Sub County have an encouraging environment to minimize dropout among girls. The studies found out that majority of the parents were not interested in readmission of their daughters. They were satisfied with their daughter's performance in the household activities and they were waiting to get them married.

According to Oiro, Mwabu and Manda (2004) and Geda, Jong, Mwabu and Kaimenyi (2001) increased access to secondary education can have implication on welfare, Individuals with secondary education are less likely to be affected by poverty than those with a lower level of education. Apart from reducing poverty, improved access to secondary education can help reduce disparities in earnings (Ngware, Onsumu, & Muthaka, 2006). Investment in secondary education contributes to human capital accumulation, which is

essential for development (Harbison & Myers, 1964). Early domestic responsibilities, especially among young girls, conflict with the pursuit of education. Retrogressive cultural practices such as female genital mutilation (FGM) and early marriages prevent the advancement of girls in education. The willingness of the parents to educate girls is reduced by socio-economic and cultural effects, such as their expected change in allegiance after marriage to the husband's family (Ngware *et al*, 2006). This study established if there is disparity in factors contributing to wastage between boys and girl in secondary schools in Meru South Sub County.

Tangible benefits of schooling, Boadu (2000) are linked to the availability of employment opportunities in the formal sector. Lack of employment opportunities, especially in rural areas may deter parent from sending children to school. Poor school quality is associated with poor academic results, with higher levels of repetition and dropout and with lower progression ratios to higher levels of education system than is the case for better schools (Ngware *et al*, 2006). According to Achola (2007) pandemic secondary school drop out is alarming since every secondary school cohort suffered not less than 10% school dropout. Achola further highlights poverty, early pregnancies and marriages, HIV/AIDS, drug abuse and low self esteem to be some of the factors contributing to wastage in form of dropout. This study sought to establish if these factors contributed to wastage in secondary schools in Meru South Sub County.

### III. METHODOLOGY

#### A. RESEARCH DESIGN

Descriptive survey research design was employed to obtain information concerning the factors contributing to dropout. Descriptive survey research design is appropriate since the researcher determined and reported the way things are (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999).

#### B. POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The accessible population was 380 teachers and 2653 form three students. The sample size comprised of 236 respondents comprising of 85 teachers and 151 students.

#### C. SAMPLING PROCEDURES

Public secondary schools in Meru South Sub-County were purposively selected for this study since through stratification they offered all characteristics common to public secondary schools. The schools were stratified based on two criteria. First public secondary schools were stratified into day and boarding schools. Boarding schools were stratified further based on gender into boys boarding, girls boarding and mixed boarding schools. Proportions of teachers and form three students from each stratum were obtained.

#### D. DATA ANALYSIS

Data from the field was collected, cleaned, coded and recorded. Data collected by use of the questionnaire, was coded, and analyzed, using Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) version 11.5 for windows. Data tape recorded during the interview was transcribed verbatim. Analysis procedures employed involved both quantitative and qualitative techniques. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics including frequency counts, percentages, and means. Data was presented in summary form using the frequency distribution tables, bar charts and pie charts.

### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### A. HEADTEACHERS' RESPONSES ON FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO DROP OUT

A total of eighty five (85) teachers participated in the study. Various factors contributing to repetition were given and the teachers were required to tick (√) against the option which best suited their option towards a given factor. The responses to various factors in the attitude scale are shown in Table 1.

Factor	SA		A		UD		D		SD		Mean
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
Forced to Repeat	10	83	2	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	4.833
Poor Academic Performance	7	58	5	42	0	0	0	0	0	0	4.583
Poverty	5	42	7	58	0	0	0	0	0	0	4.417
Failure to Adjust to School Environment	4	33	8	67	0	0	0	0	0	0	4.333
Sickness	3	25	9	75	0	0	0	0	0	0	4.250
Pregnancy	3	25	9	75	0	0	0	0	0	0	4.250
Indiscipline	3	25	8	67	1	8.3	0	0	0	0	4.167
Family Break-Up	3	25	7	58	1	8.3	1	8.3	0	0	4.000
Lack of Community Support	3	25	7	58	0	0	1	8.3	1	8.3	3.833
Failure to Pay Other School Levies	2	17	5	42	5	42	0	0	0	0	3.750
Lack of Interest in School	2	17	3	25	7	58	0	0	0	0	3.583
Unexplained Reasons	3	25	9	75	0	0	0	0	0	0	3.417
Substance Abuse	1	8.3	3	25	7	58	1	8.3	0	0	3.333
Death and Incapacitation	0	0	0	0	12	0	0	0	0	0	3.000
Systemic Child Abuse	0	0	0	0	7	58	3	25	2	17	2.417
Perceived Gender Roles	0	0	2	17	1	8.3	6	50	3	25	2.167
Early Marriages	0	0	1	8.3	2	17	6	50	3	25	2.083
Impact of HIV/AIDS	0	0	0	0	2	17	8	67	2	17	2.000
Civil Unrest	0	0	0	0	2	17	5	42	5	42	1.750
Initiation and Cultural Practices	0	0	0	0	2	17	4	33	6	50	1.667
Child Labour	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	58	5	42	1.583

Table 1: Head Teachers Responses on Factors Contributing to Repetition

Table 1 shows the choices made by the head teachers on factors that contribute to repetition in secondary schools in Meru South Sub County. It shows the frequencies, percentages

and the mean scores of the choices made. All (100%) considered that students repeat classes after being forced. The factor produced a mean score of 4.833. Forcing students to repeat classes was considered a significant factor contributing to repetition.

With regard to poor academic performance, all twelve out of twelve (100%) the head teachers agreed, none were undecided, disagreed or strongly disagreed. The responses produced mean score of 4.583, since the mean score was above the average mean score of 3; poor academic performance was considered a significant factor contributing to repetition. All (100%) of the respondents considered poverty a significant factor contributing to repetition, the responses produced a mean score of 4.417. which was above the average mean score. The study concluded that poverty contributed to repetition in secondary schools in Meru South Sub County.

Pertaining to whether failure to adjust to school environment contributes to repetition all (100%) of the head teachers agreed. A mean score of 4.333 was generated, making this a significant factor contributing to repetition. On whether sickness contributes to repetition, 25% of the respondents strongly agreed, another 75% agreed none were undecided, disagreed or strongly disagreed. These responses produced a mean score of 4.25. Since the mean score was above 3, this factor was considered to significantly contribute to repetition.

The study sought to establish if pregnancy contribute to repetition, all (100%) of the head teachers considered that students repeat classes due to pregnancy. This produced a mean score of 4.25, making it a significant factor contributing to repetition. Pertaining to whether family break ups contribute to repetition, 25% of the head teachers agreed while 58.3% agreed, 8.3% were undecided leaving another 8.3% who disagreed. The responses produced a mean score of 4. This factor was hence considered to significantly contribute to repetition since the mean score was above the average mean score of 3.

Regarding whether lack of community support contribute to repetition, 25% of the respondents strongly agreed, another 58.3 % agreed while 8.3 % of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively, from these responses a mean score of 3.833 was computed. This factor was considered to contribute to repetition. Majority (58.3%) of the respondents were undecided on whether students repeat classes due to lack of interest, however 16.7% strongly agreed and another 25% agreed. This produced a mean score of 3.583, since this was above the average mean score of 3; lack of interest in education was considered a factor contributing to repetition.

On whether students repeat classes due to unexplained reasons, 25% strongly agreed, 75% agreed, none were undecided, disagreed or strongly disagreed. A mean score of 3.417 was produced from these responses. The study therefore established that students repeat classes due to unexplained reasons. The study sought to establish whether failure to pay other school levies contribute to repetition, 16.7% of the head teachers strongly agreed, and 41.7% agreed while another 41.7% were undecided. None of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed. The responses produced a mean score of

3.7. Since the mean score was above average, the factor was considered to contribute to repetition.

Pertaining to substance abuse, 8.3% of the head teachers strongly agreed, and 25% agreed, 58.3% were undecided while 8.3% disagreed. The responses produced a mean score of 3.333. Substance abuse was found to contribute to repetition. From the this study it was established that majority of the head teachers did not consider child labour, initiation and cultural practices, impact of HIV/AIDS, perceived gender roles, early marriages, systemic child abuse, death and incapacitation and civil unrest to be factor contributing to repetition in secondary schools in Meru South Sub County. Analysis of mean on these factors produced mean scores of 3 or below, the study therefore concluded that these factors do not contribute to repetition.

## B. TEACHERS' RESPONSES ON FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO REPETITION

A total of eighty five (85) teachers participated in the study. The opinions of the teachers pertaining to factors that contribute to repetition were captured on Likert's scale and are presented in Table 2.

Factor	SA		A		UD		D		SD		MEAN
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
Poor Academic Performance	56	55.9	28	32.9	1	1.2	0	0	0	0	4.650
Forced To Repeat	29	34.2	49	57.6	2	2.4	5	5.9	0	0	4.200
Substance Abuse	29	34.1	49	57.6	2	2.4	2	1.2	4	4.7	4.180
Indiscipline	30	35.3	37	43.5	9	10.6	6	7.1	3	3.5	4.000
Poverty	16	18.8	57	67.1	4	4.7	7	8.2	1	1.2	3.940
Failure To Pay Other School Levies	13	15.3	56	65.9	10	11.8	1	1.2	5	5.9	3.840
Sickness	0	0	74	87.1	3	3.5	5	5.9	3	3.5	3.740
Pregnancy	17	20	50	58.8	5	5.9	4	4.7	9	11	3.730
Lack Of Interest In School	10	11.7	39	45.9	11	12.9	19	22	6	7.1	3.330
Family Break-Up	6	7	44	51.8	11	12.9	12	14	12	14	3.240
Failure To Adjust To School Environment	4	4.7	41	48.2	17	20	16	19	7	8.2	3.220
Unexplained Reasons	0	0	43	50.6	17	20	17	20	8	9.4	3.120
Death And Incapacitation	18	21.1	15	17.6	14	16.5	31	37	7	8.2	3.070
Early Marriages	8	9.5	29	34.1	17	20	15	18	16	19	2.980
Perceived Gender Roles	0	0	37	43.5	16	18.8	19	22	13	15	2.910
Lack Of Community Support	0	0	27	31.7	28	32.9	13	15	17	20	2.770
Child Labour	5	5.9	23	27.1	22	25.9	14	17	21	25	2.730
Impact Of HIV/AIDS	1	1.2	28	32.9	18	21.2	18	21	20	24	2.670
Systemic Child Abuse	1	1.2	25	28.4	24	28.2	11	13	24	28	2.620
Initiation And Cultural Practices	4	4.7	8	9.4	25	29.4	31	36	17	20	2.420
Civil Unrest	0	0	12	14.1	20	23.5	26	31	27	32	2.220

Table 2: Teachers Responses on Factors Contributing to Repetition

Table 13 shows the teachers choices to an attitude scale on factors that contribute to repetition in secondary schools in

Meru South Sub County. It shows the frequencies, percentages and the mean on specific factors.

55.9% of the respondents strongly agreed that poor academic performance contribute to repetition, another 32.9% agreed while only 1.2% of the respondents were undecided, none of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed. The responses produced a mean score of 4.647 and poor academic performance was therefore considered a factor contributing to repetition. Pertaining to whether students repeat classes because they are forced, 34.2% of the respondents strongly agreed, 57.6% agreed, only 2.4% were undecided while 5.9% of the respondents disagreed. None of the respondents strongly disagreed. The responses produced a mean score of 4.200, hence this was considered to be a significant factor contributing to repetition.

On whether substance abuse contributes to repetition, 34.1% of the teachers strongly agreed, 57.6% agreed, only 2.4% were undecided a meager 1.2% disagreed while 4.7% strongly disagreed. A mean score of 4.176 was produced from these responses. Since the mean score was above average mean score, substance abuse was considered a significant factor contributing to repetition in public secondary schools in Meru South Sub County. On whether indiscipline contributes to repetition, 35.3% of the teachers strongly agreed, another 43.5% agreed while 10.6% were undecided. 7.3% disagreed and only 3.5% strongly agreed. From this data a mean score of 4.000 was computed. Since the mean score was above the average mean score of 3, this factor was considered a significant factor contributing to repetition.

The study also sought to establish whether poverty was a factor contributing to repetition. 18.8% of the respondents strongly agreed, 67.1% agreed, only 4.7% were undecided, 8.2% disagreed and 1.2% strongly disagreed. A mean score of 3.941 was computed from the responses. Poverty was considered a factor contributing to repetition in public secondary schools in Meru South Sub County. 15.3% of the teachers strongly agreed that failure to pay other school levies contribute to repetition, 65.9% agreed. 11.8% were undecided while only 1.2% and 5.9% disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. The responses produced a mean score of 3.835. Since the mean score was above the average mean score, failure to pay other school levies was considered a factor that contributed to repetition.

Regarding to whether sickness contribute to repetition, none of the respondents strongly agreed, 87.1% agreed, only 3.5% were undecided, 5.9% disagreed while another 3.5% strongly disagreed. A mean score of 3.729 was computed hence sickness was considered a significant factor contributing to repetition. The study sought to establish whether pregnancy contribute to repetition, 20% of the respondents strongly agreed, 58.8% agreed, 5.9% were undecided, only 4.9% disagreed while 10.6% strongly disagreed. The data produced a mean score of 3.729 and was therefore considered to significantly contribute to repetition since the means core was above the average mean score of 3.

With regard to lack of interest in school, 11.7% of the respondents strongly agreed that it was a factor contributing to repetition, 45.9% agreed, 12.9% were undecided, 22.4% disagreed while 7.1% strongly disagreed. The responses produced a mean score of 3.329. Majority (57.6%) of the

teachers considered this a factor contributing to repetition. On whether Failure to adjust to school environment contributed to repetition, 4.7% of the teachers strongly agreed, 48.2% agreed, 20% were undecided, 18.8% disagreed while 8.2% strongly disagreed the responses produced a mean score of 3.224. This factor was considered to contribute to repetition.

Pertaining to whether students repeated classes due to unexplained reasons, none of the teachers strongly agreed while 50.6% agreed. 20% of the respondents were undecided another 20% disagreed while 9.4% strongly disagreed. From these responses a mean score of 3.118 was computed. The study therefore established that students repeat classes for certain reasons unknown to the teachers. Majority of the teachers did not consider death and incapacitation, early marriages, perceived gender roles, lack of community support, child labour, impact of HIV/AIDS pandemic, systemic child abuse, initiation and cultural practices and civil unrest factors contributing to repetition by teachers.

### C. STUDENTS' RESPONSES ON FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO REPETITION

The study sought to establish students' perceptions on factors that contribute to repetition in secondary schools in Meru South Sub County. A total of one hundred and fifty one (151) students participated in the study. Responses on various factors were captured on a Likert's scale and are presented on Table 3

Factor	SA		A		UD		D		SD		Mean
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
Poor Academic Performance	110	72.8	32	21.2	2	1.3	5	3.3	2	1.3	4.576
Substance Abuse	75	49.6	43	28.5	9	6	11	7.3	13	8.6	4.033
Pregnancy	75	49.7	42	27.8	8	5.3	8	5.3	18	11.9	3.980
Forced to Repeat	68	45	44	29.1	8	5.3	14	9.3	17	11.3	3.874
Sickness	52	34.4	56	37.1	16	10.6	19	12.6	8	5.3	3.828
Poverty	62	41.1	41	27.2	12	7.9	17	11.3	19	12.6	3.728
Family Breakups	42	27.8	48	31.8	23	15.2	26	17.2	12	7.9	3.543
Systemic Child Abuse	36	23.8	46	30.5	29	19.2	26	17.2	14	9.3	3.424
Early Marriages	51	33.8	34	22.5	12	7.9	28	18.5	26	17.2	3.371
Failure to Pay Other School Levies	49	32.4	35	23.2	13	8.6	25	16.6	29	19.2	3.331
Indiscipline	43	28.5	41	27.2	8	5.3	35	23.2	24	15.9	3.291
Impact of HIV/AIDS	38	25.2	36	23.8	21	13.9	28	18.5	28	18.5	3.185
Unexplained Reason	23	15.2	32	21.2	46	30.5	25	16.6	25	16.6	3.020
Lack of Interest	31	20.5	41	27.2	11	7.3	31	20.5	37	24.5	2.987
Community Support	20	13.2	33	21.9	27	17.9	38	25.2	33	21.9	2.795
Civil Unrest	18	11.9	14	9.3	43	28.5	50	32.6	26	17.2	2.656
Child Labour	17	11.3	35	23.2	23	15.2	27	17.9	49	32.5	2.629
Perceived Gender Roles	10	6.6	25	16.6	39	25.8	53	35.1	24	15.9	2.629
Death and Incapacitation	22	14.6	16	10.6	26	17.2	48	31.7	39	25.8	2.563
Failure to Adjust to School Environment	11	7.3	26	17.2	23	15.2	50	33.1	41	27.2	2.444
Initiation and Cultural Practices	11	7.3	16	10.6	18	11.9	55	36.4	51	33.8	2.212

Table 3: Students Responses on Factors Contributing to Repetition

Information of Table 14 shows students opinions on factors contributing to repetition. It shows the frequencies,

percentages and mean score obtained on various factors on an attitude scale. Regarding to whether poor academic performance contribute to repetition, 72.8% of the students strongly agreed, and 21.2% agreed, only 1.3% were undecided, 3.3% disagreed while 1.3% strongly disagreed. The responses produced a mean score of 4.576. Poor academic performance was considered a significant factor contributing to repetition since the mean score was above the average mean score of 3. Majority (78.1%) of the students agreed that substance abuse contributes to repetition, 6.0% were undecided while 7.3% and 8.6% disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. From this data, a mean score of 4.033 was computed. Since the mean score was above the average, substance abuse was highly rated as a significant factor that contributed to repetition.

Pregnancy was highly rated to contribute to repetition with 49.7% of the students strongly agreeing, 27.8% agreed, 5.3% were undecided, 5.3% disagreed while 11.9% strongly disagreed. The responses produced a mean score of 3.980. Since the mean was above the average mean of three (3), this was considered a factor contributing to repetition. On whether student repeat classes after being forced, 45% of the respondents strongly agreed, and 29.1% agreed, only 5.3% were undecided, 9.3% disagreed while 11.3% strongly disagreed. The responses produced a mean score of 3.874. Since the mean score was above the average mean score this was considered a factor contributing to repetition.

28.5% of the respondents strongly agreed that students drop out due to indiscipline, 27.2% agreed, 5.3% were undecided, 23.2% disagreed while 15.9% strongly disagreed. The responses produced a mean score of 3.291. This was considered a factor contributing to repetition. Pertaining to whether sickness contributes to repetition, 34.4% of the students strongly agreed, 37.1% agreed, 10.6% were undecided, 12.6% disagreed while only 5.3% strongly disagreed. From these responses a mean score of 3.828 and was hence perceived to be a factor contributing to repetition as alluded by majority (71.1%) of the respondents.

Pertaining to the impact of HIV/AIDS 25.2% of the respondents strongly agreed that it was a factor that contributed to repetition. Another 23.8% agreed. 13.9% were undecided while 18.5% disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. The responses produced a mean score of 3.185, which was slightly above the average. Therefore this was considered a factor that contributes to repetition.

With regard to whether poverty contributes to repetition, 41.1% of the students strongly agreed, 27.2% agreed, 7.9% were undecided, 11.3% disagreed while 12.6% strongly disagreed. A mean score of 3.728 was computed from the responses. Poverty was perceived to be a factor contributing to drop out since the computed mean score was above the average mean score of 3. 27.8% of the students strongly agreed that family break ups contribute to repetition, another 31.8% agreed, 15.2% were undecided, 17.2% disagreed while 7.9% strongly disagreed. The responses produced a mean score of 3.543. Since the mean score computed was above the average mean score, family break ups was considered a significant factor contributing to repetition.

On whether early marriages contribute to repetition, 33.8% of the respondents strongly agreed, 22.5% agreed,

another 7.9% were undecided. 18.5% of the respondents disagreed while 17.2% strongly disagreed. A mean score of 3.371 was produced and since this was above the average mean score, the factor was considered to contribute significantly to repetition. Pertaining to systemic child abuse, 23.8% of the students strongly agreed that it was a factor that contributed to repetition, 30.5% agreed, 19.2% were undecided, 17.2% disagreed while 9.3% strongly disagreed. The responses produced a mean score of 3.424 which was above the average. The study therefore concludes that this was a significant factor that contributed to repetition.

With regard to whether failure to pay other school levies contributes to repetition, 32.4% of the respondents strongly agreed, 23.2% agreed, 8.6% were undecided, 16.6% disagreed while 19.2% strongly disagreed, the responses produced a mean score of 3.331, since the mean score was above the average mean score of 3, this was considered a factor that contributes to repetition. Majority of the students did not consider child labour, failure to adjust to school environment, initiation and cultural practices, lack of interest in school, perceived gender roles, lack of community support, unexplained reasons, death and incapacitation and civil unrest to contribute to repetition in secondary schools in Meru South Sub County. The mean scores obtained from responses on these factors were below the average mean score of 3 hence they were not considered as significant factors contributing to repetition.

## V. CONCLUSION

The study established that students were being forced to repeat classes. This is aimed towards maintaining high academic performance and ensuring that the school is highly ranked by maintaining high mean score in the national examination. This contradicts the objectives of education in Kenya as stipulated in Sessional Paper Number 1 of 2005 (ministry of education, 2005), the policy framework spells retention and completion as the ultimate goal of education system in Kenya. The study also established poor academic performance, poverty, failure to adjust to school environment, sickness, pregnancy, indiscipline and family break ups as factors contributing to repetition among students in secondary schools in Meru South Su County.

From the findings the study also concludes that lack of community support failure to pay other school levies and lack of interest in school were significant factors contributing to repetition in secondary schools in Meru South sub County.

## VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study findings the researcher recommends that:

- ✓ Schools to build information systems that can pinpoint students at risk of repeating classes. Students who come from low income families, are children of single parents, are pregnant or parenting teenagers, have a pattern of disciplinary problems or poor socio-emotional development, perform poorly in academics, have a history

of substance abuse and inconsistent school attendance are all at a risk of repeating classes.

- ✓ In service programs for teachers by the ministry of education to ensure that they have sufficient subject knowledge and repertoire of teaching methodologies and strategies. Training programs should be relevant and responsive to the needs of the education system.
- ✓ The government through the ministry of education should support a strong individualized curriculum with career learning components for all students. Providing high level academic curricula that are connected to the real world through out of school experience, such as service learning and hands on learning in business and industry to arouse students' interest and academic performance in school.
- ✓ Students should not be forced to repeat classes irrespective of their academic performance. The government through the Ministry of Education should enforce the policy on automatic promotion of students to the next grade without regarding their academic performance.

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