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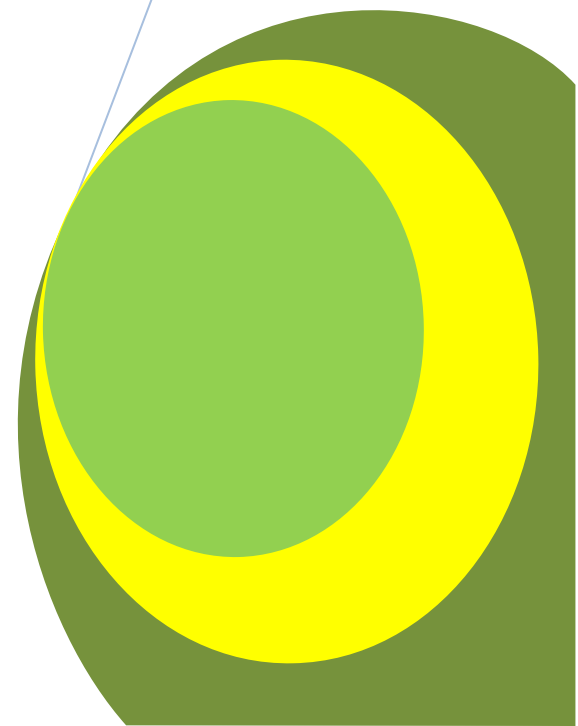
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## **Influence of Free Secondary Education Policy on Repetition Rates in Kenya: A Case Study of Kericho County**

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# Influence of Free Secondary Education Policy on Repetition Rates in Kenya: A Case Study of Kericho County

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## ABSTRACT

In pursuance of provision of Education for All, Free Secondary Education policy was adopted in 2008 to enhance access, improve quality, equity, relevance and Gender Parity in the provision of secondary school education in Kenya, Kericho County inclusive. The first cycle of students who benefitted from Free Secondary Education policy graduated in 2011. The national Gender Parity Indices from 2004 to 2007 were 0.89, 0.89, 0.89 and 0.85 respectively while in Kericho County they were 0.75, 0.63, 0.66, and 0.71 respectively which were lower than the national. Form to form transition fluctuated as follows 9,103; 9,333; 9,217 and 9,281 in Kericho County meaning that repetition was a concern that required to be addressed. Since Free Secondary Education policy was introduced to address this concern it was important to determine its influence on first cycle of Free Secondary Education funding. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to establish influence of Free Secondary Education Policy on repetition in Kericho County. Objective of the study was to determine the influence of Free Secondary Education policy on repeater rates in Kericho County. The study was based on this concept of investment choices by Pscharapoulos and Woodhall (1985), because Free Secondary Education subsidy is an investment choice in Kenya. This study established that Free Secondary Education policy had very low positive influence on repetition with Pearson (r) coefficient of 0.04 and  $R^2$  of 0.0016 which means it enhanced repetition by 0.16%. The study concluded that Free Secondary Education had very low influence on repetition rates. The study recommended that forced or voluntary repetition should be eradicated as it contributes to wastage in education and militates against the intention of Free Secondary Education policy. The findings of this study are important to stakeholders in secondary education in informing them on the need to review the policy with a view to reducing repetition rates in secondary school education so as to achieve the objectives Free Secondary Education policy.

**Key Words:** Influence, Free Secondary Education Policy, Repetition, Kericho County, Kenya.

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## INTRODUCTION

Education is vital in eradicating extreme poverty, reducing child mortality rates, fighting epidemic /pandemic disease such as malaria, Ebola, Tuberculosis Human Immunodeficiency Virus and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, and developing a global partnership for development. This is supported by world summit declaration on Education for All which is a global movement led by the United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization, which aimed at meeting the learning needs of all children, youth and adults by 2015 (World Bank, 2000a). United Nations Human Regional Commission (2012) points out that education is both a human right in itself and an indispensable means of realizing other human rights. World Bank (2011) states that some countries are now declaring free universal secondary education. In this respect countries like Angola, Benin, Botswana, Uganda and several other sub-Saharan Africa have introduced Free Secondary Education Policy to be in line with both Education for All Goal and Millennium Development Goals. It is against this backdrop that the Kenya government introduced Free Primary Education and Free Secondary policies in 2003 and 2008 respectively. Free Secondary Education policy was put in place to enhance transition from primary to secondary school by making secondary school education affordable. The objectives of Free Secondary Education policy were to enhance access or transition to secondary education, improve quality, equity, relevance and gender parity in the provision of secondary school education (Ministry of Education, 2007). Currently the government remits Kshs. 28 billion on annually to all public secondary schools to benefit some 2.2 million students and Kshs. 14 billion to public primary schools annually for 10 million pupils. To achieve these objectives the government provided a guideline (Table 1).

**Table 1: Costs incurred by the Government for each Student per Year after the Introduction of Free Secondary Education Policy in 2008**

Vote head	Day Schools (Kshs.)	Boarding Schools (Kshs.)	
	GOK Subsidy (Free Secondary Education )	GOK Subsidy ( Free Secondary Education )	Parent Fees
Tuition	3,600	3,600	0
Boarding, Equipment and Stores	0	0	13,034
Repair, Maintenance and Improvement	400	400	400
Local Travel and Transport	400	400	500
Administration Costs	500	500	350
Electricity, water and Conservancy	500	500	1500
Activity Fees	600	600	0
Personal Emolument	3,965	3,935	2,743
Medical	300	300	100
<b>Total School Fees</b>	<b>10,265</b>	<b>10,265</b>	<b>18,635</b>

**Source: Ministry of Education (2009)**

According to the Ministry of Education (2009) Free Secondary Education is meant to cater for the following items in secondary education: Tuition Kshs. 3,600/=, to cater for the students learning materials for instance textbooks, reams of paper, exercise books and other learning materials, Kshs. 400/= for Repair, Maintenance and Improvement, Kshs. 500/= for Electricity, Water Supply and Conservancy. Kshs. 400/= for Local Transport and Travel, Kshs.500/= Administrative Costs, Kshs.3,965/=, Personal Emolument. Kshs. 600/= and Kshs. 300/= Co-curricular activities and medical care respectively. The day schools parents were to cater for Lunch, Uniforms, personal effects and other projects for example expansion of infrastructure upon approval by the District Education Board in consultation with the Board of Governors and Parents Teachers Association. Clear the fee balance for continuing students for the academic year 2008 (MOE, 2009). The boarding schools on the other hand parents should cater for boarding, Equipments and store Kshs.13, 034/=, Repair, maintenance and improvement Kshs. 400/=, Electricity, water supply and conservancy Kshs. 1,500/= Local Transport and Travel Kshs. 500/= Personal Emolument Kshs. 2,743/= and medical care Kshs. 100/= respectively. Making a total of Kshs. 18,635/=. Parents were not required to pay for tuition and co-curricular activities but they were to cater for the following costs school uniforms, boarding and projects (MOE, 2009).

Repetition in schools is a waste of resources to both the parents and the government because the students occupy the space and use resources that would have been used by new entrants. According to UNESCO (2004 a) worldwide, 6.0% of primary school pupils and 7.8% of secondary school students repeat a grade annually. In primary schools, repetition rates are highest in West and Central Africa (average repetition rate is 12.9%), Eastern and Southern Africa (12.4%), and Latin America and the Caribbean (10.0%). In secondary schools, the highest repetition rates are observed in West and Central Africa (18.8%), the Middle East and North Africa (12.0%), and in Eastern and Southern Africa (12.3%). In East Asia and the Pacific, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, the industrialized countries, and South Asia, not more than 5% of pupils at the primary or secondary level repeat a grade. A report given by Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring and Evaluation Quality (2012) indicated that in Zanzibar the repetition rate at secondary school level was 4.9% per annum. In Kenya repetition was 2.6% at secondary school level (Onsomu & Muthaka, 2008). The preliminary survey in Kericho County indicated fluctuations in the students' enrolment as they transited from one form to another. The studies reviewed on the other hand focused on primary and secondary school repetition in general worldwide. These studies (UNESCO, 2004; SACMEQ, 2012; Onsomu & Muthaka, 2008) did not address the influence of Free Secondary Education policy on repetition in Kericho County secondary schools for the cohort 2008. This was the knowledge gap this study sought to fill.

### Research Objective

The research objective was: To determine the influence of Free Secondary Education Policy on repetition rates in secondary schools in Kericho County.

### SYNTHESIS OF LITERATURE ON REPETITION RATES IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

UNESCO (2004) revealed in its study the average repetition rates in primary and secondary schools in the world and the results were as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2: Average Repetition rates per region, Primary and Secondary School in the world 2001/02**

Region	Repetition rate (%)	
	Primary School	Secondary School
East Asia, Pacific	1.9	2.2
Eastern and Southern Africa	12.4	12.3
Eastern Europe, CIS	1.2	1.2
Industrialized countries	2.1	3.9
Latin America, Caribbean	10.0	7.4
Middle East, North Africa	8.0	12.9
South Asia	4.5	5.0
West and Central Africa	12.9	18.8
<b>World</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>7.8</b>

**Data source: UNESCO, Institute for Statistics (UIS) 2004.  
Global Education Digest 2004. Montreal: UIS.**

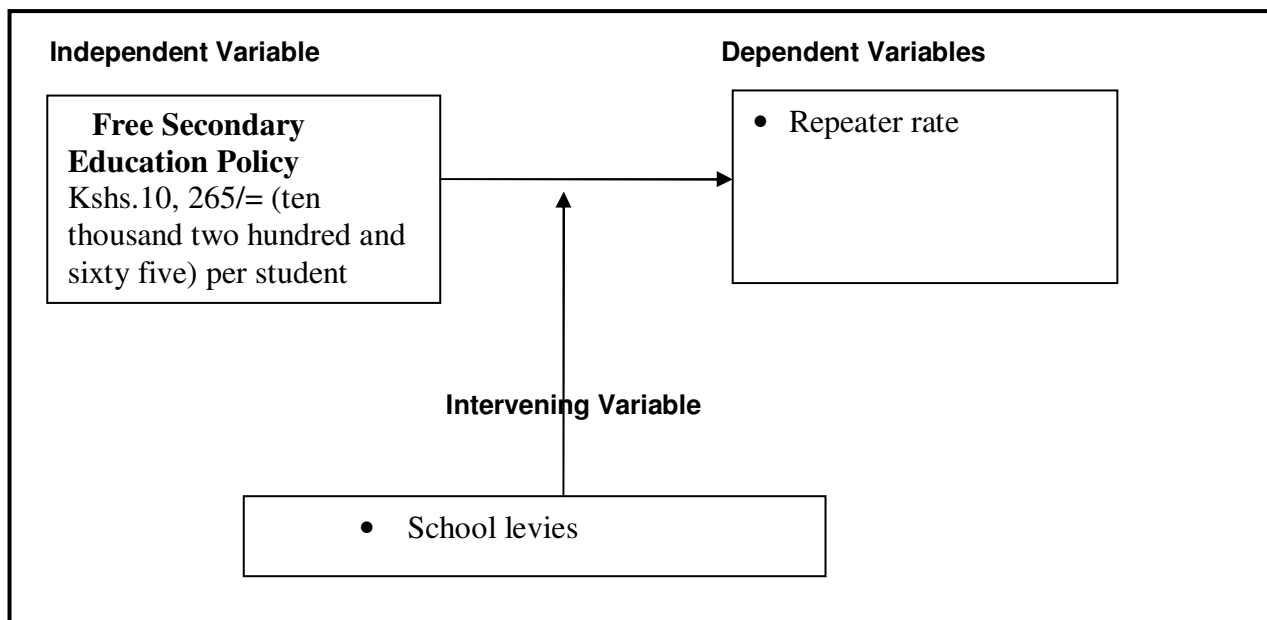
Regional averages, weighted by each country's population of primary school age, are listed as Table 2. Worldwide, 6.0% of primary students and 7.8% of secondary students repeat a grade. In primary school, repetition rates are highest in West and Central Africa (average repetition rate 12.9%), Eastern and Southern Africa (12.4%), and Latin America and the Caribbean (10.0%). In secondary school, the highest repetition rates are observed in West and Central Africa (18.8%), the Middle East and North Africa (12.0%), and in Eastern and Southern Africa (12.3%). In East Asia and the Pacific, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, the industrialized countries, and South Asia, not more than 5% of pupils at the primary or secondary level repeat a grade. A comparison of primary school gross and net enrollment rates indicates that there is a high share of late entrants and grade repeaters in Sub-Saharan Africa. Repetition rates in primary and secondary school are listed in the Global Education Digest 2004 from UNESCO. Primary repetition rates are available for 138 countries, secondary repetition rates for 125 countries (UNESCO, 2004). The 15 countries with the highest share of repeaters at the primary level are located in West and Central Africa or Eastern and Southern Africa. The highest primary school repetition rates are observed in Equatorial Guinea (40.5%), Rwanda (36.1%) and Gabon (34.4%). Of the 17 countries with the highest share of repeaters at the secondary level, 15 are in Sub-Saharan Africa and 2 in the Middle East and North Africa. The highest secondary school repetition rates exist in Congo 30.8%, Iraq 27.5% and Algeria 27.2% (UNESCO, 2012).

According to Huebler (2010) an analysis of data from a Demographic and Health Survey done in 2001 demonstrates that the vast majority of pupils in primary and secondary school in Liberia are older than the theoretical age for their grade. For example, nearly three quarters of all first-graders in Liberia are at least 3 years older than the official entrance age into primary education. Twenty four percent of all first-graders are 5 or 6 years overage, 14% are 7 or 8 years overage, and 5% are 9 or more years overage. Children in the last group start primary school at age 15 or later. According to UNESCO (2006 a) Grade repeaters are more likely to come from families that rank lower on measures of socioeconomic status and related variables (income, parental years of education completed). They also are more likely to be male than female. Subsequently, it occurs more often at grades preceding transitions to middle school, junior high school, or high school than at other grades. Repetition decisions are almost always initiated by the school rather than the parents, although they may be communicated as recommendations rather than requirements (in which case, the final decision is left up to the parents). South Africa basic education (2011) carried out a household survey and found that in 2009, on average 9% of learners enrolled in schools were repeating the grade they were in the previous year. South Africa's level of repetition is high. International comparative information for primary schools for 2007 shows that South Africa's average level of repetition in primary schools at (7%), was higher than the average level for developing countries (5%) and for developed countries (less than 1%). In general, repetition is higher among male learners than female learners and much greater in higher grades than in the lower grades.

Musyimi (2011) did a case study on wastage rates in Kenya secondary schools in Kathonzweni district, Makueni County showed that repetition rate for the boys was 1.4% in form 1, 2% in form 2, 4% in form 3 and 6% in form 4 while for the girls was 2% in form 1, 3% in form 2, 4% in form 3 and 7% in form 4. Studies further revealed that this repetition rates was caused by poor performance, forced repetition, chronic absenteeism, teenage pregnancies and drug abuse. Okuom, Simatwa, Olel and Wichenje (2012) in their study established high repeater rate of 23.63% and dropout rate of 20.17% in Nyando District. Floods and flood related factors were found to be the cause to loss of learning hours and equally exacerbating poverty through destruction of infrastructure and school structures, water borne diseases, high absenteeism, low syllabus coverage and poor performance in flood prone areas of Nyando District. Data was collected using document analysis guide, questionnaire, interview schedule and focus group discussion. This study was done in primary schools.

A study by Macharia, (2013) in Gatanga District, Muranga County found that in the period between 2008 and 2011. Repeater rates greatly increased. It was concluded that the Free Secondary Education policy had contributed negatively to internal efficiency of day schools negatively through increased repeater rates. Questionnaires, interview schedules and document analysis were used to collect data. International Labour Organization (2010) in the study on the micro factors inhibiting education access, retention and completion by children from vulnerable communities in Kwale District, Kenya revealed that the reasons which leads to repetition were absenteeism, pregnancies due to weddings and funerals that take long, human wildlife conflicts, hunger, sickness, distance, beliefs around witchcraft and evil spirits. The studies reviewed were done worldwide and in sub-Saharan countries generally. The one done by Musyimi (2011) did a case study on wastage rates in Kenya secondary schools in Kathonzi District, Makueni County on repetition rate before the introduction of Free Secondary Education policy. The study done in Nyando District by Okuom et al (2012) was done in primary schools. These studies did not unravel the influence of Free Secondary Education on repeater rates in secondary schools in Kericho County.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework Showing the Influence of the Free Secondary Education Policy on Repeater rate and Dropout rate in Kericho County**

This conceptual framework helped to focus on independent and dependent variables. Independent variable is Free Secondary Education policy while dependent variables were repeater rate and dropout rate. According to Mc Burney and White (2010) an independent variable is selected by the experimenter to determine the effects of behavior while dependent variable is a measure of a subject's behavior that determines independent variables effects. This study focused on the following variables Free Secondary Education Policy and the influence it had on repetition and dropout in Kericho County. The school levies is an intervening variable. This variable was taken care of by including in correlations to establish its influence. The dependent variables were repetition and dropout in Kericho County secondary schools. Gender parity was determined by computing the difference between the boys and the girl before and after Free Secondary Education policy. Two cohorts were used for the study. The first cohort was before Free Secondary Education from 2004 to 2007 this was used as a control group, while the second cohort was after Free Secondary Education policy from 2008 to 2011. The repetition and dropout were computed in Kericho County secondary schools before and after Free Secondary Education policy. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficients and coefficient of determination were used to establish the influence of Free Secondary Education funds on repetition and dropout in Kericho County.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Descriptive, *ex-post facto* and correlational research designs were adopted. The study population was 45 Principals, 5 District Quality Assurance and Standard Officers, 45 Directors of Studies and 4,362 form IV students of 2011. The sample size was 400 form IV students, 5 District Quality Assurance and Standard Officers, 40 Directors of Studies and 40 Principals. Snowball and saturated sampling techniques were used to select respondents. Questionnaire, interview schedules, focus group discussion and document analysis guide were used to collect data. Supervisors validated the instruments. Reliability coefficient of the principals' questionnaire was 0.80 at set p-value of 0.05. Quantitative data was analyzed using cohort analysis, descriptive and inferential statistics. Qualitative data was transcribed and analyzed in emergent themes and sub themes. This study established that Free Secondary Education policy had very low positive influence on repetition with Pearson (r) coefficient of 0.04 and  $R^2$  of 0.0016 which means it increased repetition by 0.16%.

## RESULTS

### Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

The respondents in this study included school Principals, Director of Studies, District Quality Assurance Standards Officer and students as shown in Tables 3 to 4.

**Table 3: Principals' Gender and Headship Experience (n=40)**

Demographic characteristics	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	30	75.00
Female	10	25.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Headship Experience in years</b>		
1-5	1	02.50
6-10	12	30.00
11-15	17	42.50
16-20	10	25.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Table 3 provides the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Out of all the 40 (100%) school Principals involved in the study 30 (75%) were male while 10 (25%) were female. This shows that very few female teachers are as appointed school Principals in Kericho County. This is in agreement with the study carried out in a sampled number of schools in Kenya by Bosire et al (2009) where it was indicated that out of the 30 sampled school Principals 22(79%) were male while 6(21%) were female. The school principals' leadership experience was also indicated and one (2.50%) had headship experience between 1-5 years, 12 (30.00%) had an experience of 6-10years, 17 (42.50%) has an experience of 11-15 years while 10 (25.00%) has an experience of 16-20 years. From the findings in Table 3, the school principals had headship experience of 6 years and above. This shows that they had enough experience on management and they were able to give the relevant information on repeater rate and dropout rate in Kericho County. Principals with experience can be relied on for the authenticity of data collected. They were also better placed given that the data required dated back to the year 2004 that required experience in school administration.

**Table 4: Teaching experience before Appointment as School Principals (n=40)**

Years	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
<b>5-10</b>	2	5.00
<b>11-15</b>	5	12.50
<b>16- 20</b>	24	60.00
<b>21-25</b>	9	22.50

Table 4 indicates the school Principals teaching experience before they reached the level of school principal. Those principals with a teaching experience of between 5 -10 years were 2(5%) between 11-15 years were 5 (12.50%), while 24(60%) had a teaching experience between 16-20 and 9 (22.50%) had a teaching experience of between 21-25 years. This shows that these School Principals had gone through all the ranks in the teaching profession and had experience to be appointed as the school Principals. According to Education Portal (2014) in the US most Principals enter the profession after obtaining enough experience as teachers. This is in agreement with the findings of this study and it shows that the principals were able to answer questions on repeater rate and dropout in Kericho County. This is vital in determining the validity of data that was generated in this study.

**Table 5: School Principals' Highest Professional Qualifications (n=40)**

Highest Qualification	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
BED, BSC +PGDE, BA + PGDE, B.COMM + PGDE	15	37.50
M.ED	25	62.50
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Table 5 indicates the education level of the school principals. Fifteen (37.50%) had a bachelors degree while 25 (62.50%) had Masters Degree. Basing on the findings in Table 4.4 it is clear that all the Principals had the required level of education. Education Portal (2014) shows that in the US the requirement to be a School Principals is a Bachelor of Education degree. This is also applicable in this study and in agreement with The Basic Education Act 2013 (Republic of Kenya, 2013). These principals were in a position to understand and give the relevant information on repeater rates and dropout rates in Kericho County, given their academic credentials.

**Table 6: School Levies incurred by Parents on average in four years before introduction of Free Secondary Education Policy for the 2004 cohort (n=40)**

Type of School	Amount (Kshs)
Days scholars in mixed schools	63,617.11
Boarders in mixed schools	96,954.05
Girls boarding	105,299.00
Boys boarding	115,234.00

Table 6 indicates the costs incurred by parents in terms of school fees and levies before Free Secondary Education policy in 2008. The day scholars in mixed schools paid on average Kshs.63, 617.11 in four years while boarders in mixed schools paid Kshs.96, 954.05 in their four years of study. The students in single sex schools paid higher than these other schools. The girls paid Kshs.105, 299 on average while the boys paid Kshs.115, 234 on average for the four years they were in school. This data was important as it assisted to understand the genesis of Free Secondary Education policy on repetition rate and dropout rate. It also helped to justify its inclusion in the study as an intervening variable.

**Table 7: Free Secondary Education Fund and School Levies incurred in four years on average for 2008 Cohort after introduction of Free Secondary Education Policy (n=40)**

Type of School	Free Secondary Education in 4 year (Kshs.)	Percentage (%)	Costs incurred by parents in 4 years (Kshs.)	Percentage (%)	Totals in Kshs.
Days scholars in mixed schools	41,060	40.43	60,509.65	59.57	<b>81,569.65</b>
Boarders in mixed schools	41,060	27.40	108,803.85	72.60	<b>112,863.85</b>
Girls boarding	41,060	25.62	119,178.57	74.38	<b>160,238.57</b>
Boys boarding	41,060	24.88	123,964.43	75.12	<b>165,024.43</b>

Table 7 indicates the costs incurred by the government and the parents after Free Secondary Education policy in Kericho County. The government spent Kshs.41, 060 for four years while the parents spent Kshs.60, 509.65 on average for four years in mixed day schools, and for boarders in mixed schools they spent Kshs.108, 803.85. In girls boarding and boys boarding they spent Kshs.119, 178.57 and Kshs.123, 964.43 respectively. Interim guidelines for the implementation of Free Secondary Education (2008) day school students were not given any guideline on the amount of levies the parents were to pay while parents in boarding schools were to pay Kshs.18, 627 per year which would add up to Kshs.74, 508 in four years. Table 7 shows how much the parents paid and it was more than the given figure and parents in day schools paid yet there was no guideline for them. This data was relevant in this study because it helped in establishing the influence of Free Secondary Education policy on repetition rate and dropout rate.

### Research Question:

The research question responded to was: What is the influence of Free Secondary Education policy on secondary school repeater rate in Kericho County?

To establish the influence of Free Secondary Education policy on secondary school Repeater rates data on enrolment was collected for two cohorts 2004 and 2008 before and after Free Secondary Education policy from the school Principals in Kericho County. Grade repeater and cumulative repeater rates were computed in Kericho County. The Grade repeater rate was computed so that the repetition patterns can indicate specific grades for which there is high repetition (UNESCO, 2009 b). The cumulative repeater rate was computed to establish the total repeaters for the county and per school. The enrolments obtained were used to compute repeater rates. The results were as shown in Tables 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12.

**Table 8: Reconstructed Cohort Students Enrolment and Repetition in Kericho County before Introduction of Free Secondary Education Policy (n=40)**

Years		Form I	Form II	Form III	Form IV
2004	E	3603			
	R	13			
	N	0			
2005	E	3632	3304		
	R	14	27		
	N	0	352		
2006	E		2926	2800	
	R		30	98	
	N		352	619	
2007	E			2829	2308
	R			89	96
	N			621	647
2008	E				2341
	R				113
	N				509

**Key: R; Repeaters      N; New Students      E; Enrolment**

Table 8 indicates the number of repeaters in a class before Free Secondary Education Policy in Kericho County. It was done basing on their enrolments as a cohort and any new students who joined after the admission was left out. Two cohorts were taken so as to capture the students who repeated a class when the rest moved to the next class. This was done by getting the admission numbers and the year they were admitted in the school using the school registers and admission books from form one to form four. According to UNESCO (2009b) repeater rate by grade is by dividing the number of repeaters in a given grade  $t+1$  by the number of pupils or students from the same cohort enrolled in the same grade in the previous school year  $t$ . Repetition rate should ideally approach zero percent since high repetition rate indicates poor internal efficiency of education (UNESCO 2009b). For this cohort the students for the cohort from 2004 to 2007 the repeaters were traced by looking at the repeaters in 2005 cohort because these repeaters belong to the 2004 cohort.



## Repeater Rates

The formula used here to determine the repeaters rates by grade was adapted from UNESCO (2009b) education indicators technical guideline.

### Formula:

$$RR_i^t = \frac{R_i^{t+1}}{E_i^t}$$

### Where

$RR_i^t$  Repetition Rate at Grade  $i$  in school year  $t$ .

$R_i^{t+1}$  Number of pupils repeating grade  $i$  in school year  $t$

$E_i^t$  Number of pupils enrolled in grade  $i$ , in the school year  $t$

The total Repeater rates for the 2004 cohort were further computed in the county and per school. According to UNESCO (2009 b) cumulative cohort repeater rate can be calculated for the whole level of education by dividing the sum of repeaters in all grades of the given level by the total enrolment of that level of education and multiple by 100. This was adopted in computing the total cohort repeater rate in that county and per school.

In this study the Repeater rates were for the cohort 2004 were computed as follows. The details were as presented in Table 9.

## Repeater Rates for the students from form I-IV

### Form one 2004

$$RR_i^t = \frac{R_i^{t+1}}{E_i^t} = \frac{14}{3603} \times 100 = 0.39\%$$

### Form two 2005

$$RR_i^t = \frac{R_i^{t+2}}{E_i^t} = \frac{30}{3304} \times 100 = 0.91\%$$

### Form three 2006

$$RR_i^t = \frac{R_i^{t+3}}{E_i^t} = \frac{89}{2800} \times 100 = 3.18\%$$

### Form Four 2007

$$RR_i^t = \frac{R_i^{t+4}}{E_i^t} = \frac{113}{2308} \times 100 = 4.90\%$$

Cumulative repeater rate for the county was computed to determine the total number of students who repeated in the 2004 cohort. The formula by UNESCO, (2009 b):

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Cumulative Cohort Repeater Rate} &= \frac{R_i^{t+1} + R_i^{t+2} + R_i^{t+3} + R_i^{t+4}}{E_i^t} \times 100 \quad \text{was used, that is,} \\ &= \frac{14+30+89+113}{3603} \times 100 \\ &= 6.83\% \end{aligned}$$

**Table 9: Students Repetition rate in Kericho County before Introduction of Free Secondary Education policy (n=40)**

Form	Repetition Rates in Percentages (%)
1	0.39
2	0.91
3	3.18
4	4.90
County Cumulative Repeater rate	6.80

Table 9 shows the percentage of repeaters before the introduction of Free Secondary Education Policy in 2008. This is a cohort that did not benefit from the Free Secondary Education policy, they joined form one in 2004 and completed in 2007. For Form one 2004 the repeater rates were 0.39%, in 2005, the repeaters in form 2 were 0.91% while in form 3 and form 4 they were 3.18% and 4.90% respectively. County Cumulative Repeater rate was 6.80.

**Table 10: Reconstructed Cohort Students Enrolment and Repetition in Kericho County after Introduction of Free Secondary Education policy (n=40)**

Years		Form I	Form II	Form III	Form IV
2008	E	4615			
	R	13			
	N	0			
2009	E	4614	4097		
	R	12	106		
	N	0	230		
2010	E		4098	3420	
	R		123	114	
	N		352	734	
2011	E			3252	2739
	R			111	134
	N			423	830
2012	E				2725
	R				136
	N				822

**Key: R; Repeaters      N; New Students      E; Enrolment**

The repeater rates were computed in Kericho County after the introduction of Free Secondary Education policy in the county using the cohort enrolled together leaving out the new students. Two cohorts were used so as to trace the repeaters of that cohort who remained behind as the rest moved to the next class.

### Repeater Rates for the students from form I-IV after Free Secondary Education policy

#### Form one 2004

$$RR_i^t = \frac{R_i^{t+1}}{E_i^t} = \frac{12}{4615} \times 100 = 0.26\%$$

#### Form two 2005

$$RR_i^t = \frac{R_i^{t+2}}{E_i^t} = \frac{123}{4097} \times 100 = 3.00\%$$

#### Form three 2006

$$RR_i^t = \frac{R_i^{t+3}}{E_i^t} = \frac{111}{3420} \times 100 = 3.25\%$$

#### Form Four 2011

$$RR_i^t = \frac{R_i^{t+4}}{E_i^t} = \frac{136}{2739} \times 100 = 4.97\%$$

Cumulative repeater rate for the county was computed to determine the total number of students who repeated in the 2004 cohort. The formula by UNESCO, (2009 b):

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Cumulative Cohort Repeater Rate} &= \frac{R_i^{t+1} + R_i^{t+2} + R_i^{t+3} + R_i^{t+4}}{E_i^t} \times 100 \quad \text{was used, that is} \\ &= \frac{12+123+111+136}{4615} \times 100 \\ &= 8.28\% \end{aligned}$$

The results were as presented in Table 11.

**Table 11: Students Repetition rate in Kericho County after Introduction of Free Secondary Education policy (n=40)**

Form	Repetition Rates in Percentages (%)
1	0.26
2	3.00
3	3.25
4	4.97
County cumulative Repeater rate	8.28

Table 11 shows the percentage of repeaters after the introduction of Free Secondary Education Policy in 2008. This is a cohort that benefited from the Free Secondary Education policy, they joined form one in 2008 and completed in 2011. The aim of Free Secondary Education policy according to the Task Force Report (2007) was to improve on entry and completion in the system. Form one 2008 the grade repeater rate were 0.26%, in form two it was 3.00% while in form three and four they were 3.25% and 4.97% respectively.

**Table 12: Comparison of the Repeaters before and after Introduction of Free Secondary Education Policy for the students in Kericho County (n=40)**

Form	Before Free Secondary Education policy	After Free Secondary Education policy
1	0.39	0.26
2	0.91	3.00
3	3.18	3.25
4	4.90	4.97
County Cumulative Repeater Rate	6.80	8.28

Table 12 shows the repeaters before and after the introduction of Free Secondary Education policy. Before Free Secondary Education repetition rates was low but after it went up especially in form two it went up from 0.91% to 3% and in for three and four it was 3.18% and 4.90% before Free Secondary Education while after it went up to 3.25% and 4.97% respectively. County Cumulative Repeater Rate was 6.80 before and 8.28 after introduction of Free Secondary Education policy.

In order to establish the influence of Free Secondary Education policy on repeater rate for 2008 cohort, data on repeater rate, Free Secondary Education fund and school levies per school were computed and the results were as shown in Tables 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 and 18.

According to UNESCO (2009 b) cumulative cohort repeater rate can be calculated for the whole level of education by dividing the sum of repeaters in all grades of the given level by the total enrolment of that level of education and multiplied by 100. This was adopted to get the cumulative cohort repeater rate per school for the 2008 cohort. The following formula by (UNESCO, 2009 b) was adopted.

$$\text{Cumulative cohort Repeater Rate} = \frac{R_i^{t+1} + R_i^{t+2} + R_i^{t+3} + R_i^{t+4}}{E_i^t} \times 100$$

**Table 13: Cumulative Repeater Rates in Kericho County per School after Introduction of Free Secondary Education Policy (n=40)**

Repeater Rates (%)	Frequency (f)	Percentages (%)
0.00-9.999	21	52.50
10.00-19.99	9	22.50
20.00-29.99	6	15.00
30.00-39.99	4	10.00
40.00-49.99	1	2.50

Table 13 indicates the repeater rates in Kericho County as indicated by the school principals in the 40 schools. Twenty one (52.50%) of the schools had repetition ranging from 0.00 to 9.99, nine (22.50%) ranged from 10.00 to 19.99, six (15.00%) ranged from 20.00 to 29.99, while four (10.00%) had repetition ranging from 30.00 to 39.99.

**Table 14: Free Secondary Education Fund received by Secondary Schools for the 2008 cohort (n=40)**

Amount (KSHS.)	Schools (f)	Percentages (%)
350,000- 759,999.99	12	30
750,000-1,149,999.99	12	30
1,150,000-1,549,999.99	7	17.5
1,550,000-1,949,999.99	2	5
1,950,000-2,349,999.99	3	7.5
2,350,000-2,749,999.99	2	5
2,750,000-3,149,999.99	2	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 14 indicates the amount of Free Secondary Education funds paid to schools depending on the number of students. Twelve (30%) of the schools received money ranging from Kshs.350,000 to 749,999.99, another 12(30%) received Free Secondary Education funds ranging from Kshs.750,000 -1,149,999.99, 7 (17.5%) received Kshs.1,150,000 to 1,549,999.99, two (5%) received between Kshs.1,550,000 to 1,949,000, three (7.5%) received between Kshs.1,950,000 to 2,349,999.99, two (5%) received between Kshs.2,350,000 to 2,749,999.99 while another 2 (5%) received between Kshs. 2750,000 to 3,149,999.99.

**Table 15: School Levies received by Secondary Schools for the 2008 cohort (n=40)**

Amount (KSHS.)	No. of Schools (f)	Percentages (%)
00-1,999,999.99	20	50
2,000,000- 3,999,999.99	10	25
4,000,000- 5,999,999.99	4	10
6,000,000-7,999,999.99	3	2.5
8,000,000-9,999,999.99	1	2.5
10,000,000-11,999,999.99	1	2.5
12,000,000-13,999,999.99	1	2.5

Table 15 indicates the school levies received by the schools depending on the number of students. Twenty (50%) of the schools received Kshs.1,999,999.99 and below, 10(25%) received levies ranging from Kshs.2,000,000 - 3,999,999.99, four (10%) received Kshs.4,000,000 to 5,999,999.99, three (7.5%) received between Kshs. 6,000,000 to 7,999,999.99, one (2.5%) received between Kshs.8,000,000 to 9,999,999.99, two (2.5%) received between Kshs. 10,000,000 to 11,999,999.99 while another one (2.5%) received between Kshs. 12,000,000 to 13,999,999.99. These were the amount of school levies the schools received for the 2008 cohort from the parents.

**Table 16: Free Secondary Education Fund and School Levies received by Secondary Schools for the 2008 cohort (n=40)**

Amount (KSHS.)	No. of Schools (f)	Percentages (%)
Below 3,999,999.99	23	57.50
4,000,000- 7,999,999.99	13	32.50
8,000,000- 11,999,999.99	3	7.50
12,000,000-15,999,999.99	0	0.00
Above 16,000,000	1	2.5

Table 16 indicates the Free Secondary Education fund and school levies received by the schools depending on the number of students. Twenty three (57.50%) of the schools received below 3,999,999.99, thirteen (32.50%) ranged from Kshs. 4,000,000-7,999,999.99, three (7.50%) received Kshs. 8, 000,000 to 11,999,999.99, one (2.5%) received above Kshs. 16,000,000. The data was correlated to establish the influence of Free Secondary Education policy on repeater rate in Kericho County. Correlation coefficients ( $r$ ) were interpreted using Elifson, Runyon and Haber (1990) guideline (Table 17).

**Table 17: Interpretation of Pearson Correlation Coefficients ( $r$ )**

Strength of the relationship	Positive (+)	Negative (-)
Weak/low/small	0.01 – 0.30	0.01 – 0.30
Moderate/ medium	0.31 – 0.70	0.31 – 0.70
Strong/high	0.71 – 0.99	0.71 – 0.99
Perfect relationship	1.00	1.00
No relationship	0.00	0.00

Pearson ( $r$ ) between + or - 0.01 – 0.30 is a weak/low/small relationship, between + or - 0.31 – 0.70 is a moderate/medium, while relationship between + or - 0.71 – 0.99 is a strong/high relationship. Perfect relationship is where it is positive or negative 1.00 while 0.00 means there is no relationship. Coefficient of determination  $R^2$  is the square of the Pearson  $r$  which tells how much of the variance is accounted for by the correlation which is expressed in percentages (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). This was adopted in the interpretation of Pearson ( $r$ ) and coefficient of determination  $R^2$  in this study.

**Table 18: Pearson Product Moment Correlation ( $r$ ) Matrix for Free Secondary Education fund and Repeater Rate in Kericho County**

		Free Secondary Education fund	School levies	Free Secondary Education fund & school levies	Repeater rate
<b>Free Secondary Education fund</b>	Pearson Correlation	1	.90	.93	.04
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.00	.00	.80
	N	40	40	40	40
<b>School levies</b>	Pearson Correlation	.89	1	1.0	.04
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.00		.00	.81
	N	40	40	40	40
<b>Free Secondary Education Fund &amp; school levies</b>	Pearson Correlation	.93	1.0	1	.05
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.00	.00		.78
	N	40	40	40	40
<b>Repeater rate</b>	Pearson Correlation	.04	.04	.05	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.80	.81	.77	
	N	40	40	40	40

Table 18 indicates that Free Secondary Education policy influence on repeater rate was 0.04. To account for the influence of Free Secondary Education on repeater rate Pearson  $r$  was squared. The coefficient of determination  $R^2 = 0.0016$  which meant that Free Secondary Education accounted for 0.16% of the variation in repeater rate. School levies which were an intervening variable had a positive weak of 0.04. Coefficient of determination  $R^2 = 0.0016$  which meant that Free Secondary Education accounted for 0.16% of the variation in students repeater rate. When school levies were combined together with Free Secondary Education as Free Secondary Education fund and school levies it had a weak negative influence of 0.05. Coefficient of determination  $R^2 = 0.0025$  which meant that school levies accounted for 0.25% of the variation in students repeater rate. This means that school levies had very little mediating effect, that is 0.0009 which translated to 0.09% on the influence of Free Secondary Education policy on repeater rates. The other factors could be motorbike business, pregnancies/early marriages, personal effects, Female Genital Mutilation, poverty and discrimination by the parents. This shows that these other factors influence the students' school attendance, performance eventually leading to repetition.

## DISCUSSION

UNESCO (2009 b) indicated that the repeater rates can be calculated for the whole level of education system by dividing the sum of repeaters in all grades of the given level of education and multiply the result by 100. While repeater rate by grade is by dividing the number of repeaters in a given grade  $t+1$  by the number of pupils or students from the same cohort enrolled in the same grade in the previous school year  $t$ . Repetition rate should ideally approach zero percent since high repetition rate indicates poor internal efficiency of education (UNESCO, 2009b). This method was very relevant to this study and the repeaters used were those of the same cohort who were left behind when the rest moved to the next classes. This study used the number of students enrolled together in form one as a cohort and left form four together. The repeaters factored in were those left behind when the rest moved to the next classes from 2008 to 2011. To trace these repeaters data for 2009 to 2012 was used. The repeaters were used divided by the number of students enrolled in form one and the same were done for all the classes. This was done for the students in the county after Free Secondary Education Policy in 2008. The following formula was also adapted as given by UNESCO (2009b) and it was expressed in percentages. Free Secondary Education policy did not reduce repeater rate as was intended. These findings agree with studies carried out worldwide by Huebler (2010) who found out that 7.8% of secondary students repeat a grade. However they do not concur with the findings by UNESCO (2012) which showed that the highest secondary school repeater rates exists elsewhere, that is, Congo (30.80%), Iraq (27.50%) and Algeria (27.2%). In secondary school, the highest repetition rates were observed in West and Central Africa (18.8%), the Middle East and North Africa (12.0%), and in Eastern and Southern Africa (12.3%). In East Asia and the Pacific, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, the industrialized countries, and South Asia, not more than 5% of pupils at the primary or secondary level repeat a grade. These findings are also in agreement with those by UNESCO (2006 a) which indicated that grade repeaters are more likely to affect the students in the upper class. It also concurs with the study carried out in South Africa on basic education (2011) which revealed that 9% of the learners who enroll in school repeat the grade they were in the previous year. The repetition was high on the higher grades than the lower grades. There is also a similarity between this study and that done by UNESCO (2004) which revealed that worldwide 7.8% of secondary school students repeat a grade. Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring and Evaluation Quality (2012) showed that in Zanzibar repetition rates stood at 4.9% per annum while in Kenya it stood at 2.6% annual according to Onsume and Muthaka (2008). These studies were done annually and it is a general view of repetition while the one in Kericho County was done per grade and overall before and after introduction of Free Secondary Education Policy. It concurs with the study done in Muranga County by Macharia, (2013) which indicated that in the period between 2008 and 2011 repeater rates greatly increased. It also concluded that the Free Secondary Education policy had contributed negatively to internal efficiency of day schools negatively through increased repeater rates.

Since each student receives Kshs. 10,265/= per year this indicates that the higher the number of students the more the money received in a school. This indicates that every school received Free Secondary Education fund at the rate Kshs.10, 265 per year this funds cater for tuition, repair maintenance and improvement, local and travel and transport, administration cost, electricity, water and conservancy, activity fees, personal emolument and medical expenses in order to reduce on repetition. According to Elifson, Runyon and Haber (1990) guideline Correlation coefficients ( $r$ ) interpretation indicated that this is a weak positive influence. This means that increases in Free Secondary Education funding cause increases in repeater rate. Coefficient of determination  $R^2$  is the square of the Pearson  $r$  which tells how much of the variance is accounted for by the correlation which is expressed in percentages (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005).

The interview findings revealed that Free Secondary Education policy had not influenced repetition in Kericho County. Students were still repeating based on school ethos and Free Secondary Education policy had no influence at all. During interview with the District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer, it was very evident that repetition was very common in schools. This was due to some many factors despite Free Secondary Education policy being in place. This has made Free Secondary Education fail in its objective of ensuring students are able to access secondary education to enroll and complete. One District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer said, "Every year we have several students who come with complaints that they have been forced to repeat or register for the national examination in another schools because of their performance. This has discouraged many students who had the intentions of completing secondary education, on time". This is as indication that schools still repeat students meaning Free Secondary Education has not help in reducing repetition but there could be other underlying factors leading to wastage. The Directors of Studies were also interviewed concerning the influence of Free Secondary Education policy on repetition. Most of the Directors of Studies revealed that repetition was still very common in their schools despite Free Secondary Education policy being in place. In fact one of them said, "we have students who repeat when the parents demanded or on their own because they want better grades to enable them do" superior courses at university level this shows that the students and parents also contributes to repetition rates in the county. There was also another Director of Studies who said, "we have come up with a policy to try and ensure the learners work hard and we encourage them to get a C minus so that they can move to the next class. Any student who gets below this grade automatically repeats a class because they have not attained the required mean score." This shows that performance has great influence repetition in these schools. Another Director of Studies revealed that, "some of these students disappear from school due to other reasons and when they report back to school they have lost a lot making them repeat to catch up. In these schools Free Secondary Education policy has little influence on repetition because of other reasons a part from these funds."

During the focus group discussion with the students they felt that repetition was made almost compulsory for them during their time. In fact one of the students said, "Despite Free Secondary Education policy being in place we were still forced to repeat if we had grades below what was set by the school". This shows that the schools administrators and parents contributes to repetition in schools making it had for Free Secondary Education policy objectives to be achieved. Despite Free Secondary Education policy, this study established that there were other underlying factors that were negating the influence of Free Secondary Education policy on repetition, since Free Secondary Education policy was meant to eradicate repetition. All the District Quality Assurance and Standard Officers, Director of Studies and Students during focus group discussion and interview confirmed that repetition was still practiced in the schools despite all the measures by the government. They further explained that schools are struggling with performance forgetting the fact that students should go through the system so that education can be internally efficient. Some of the Director of Studies especially from single sex schools revealed that students repeater in their schools. In fact one of the Directors of Studies said, "Free Secondary Education policy has not reduced repetition in any way because currently more students are repeating. This is because there are other factors that contribute to these apart from Free Secondary Education fund being in place". They further gave the following reasons that had contributed to repetition in the county through interview and focus group discussion. They indicated that motor bike business was the main contributor of repetition since most student do the business during their free time and holidays hence leading to poor performance due to lack of concentration. A director of studies strongly said, "The parents are to blame for the motor bike influence on their children since some of them find that this is a source of income to the family hence they allow the boys to engage in it making them not to do well in school because of lack of concentration in class". This leads to being forced to repeat.

The girls were also affected but by the motor bike business men who enticed them with money so as they can engage in sexual activities leading to pregnancy and early marriage. This leads them to repeat if they come back to school because of lack of consistency. The other reason that was mentioned largely by all the District Quality Assurance and Standard Officers, Director of Studies and Students in focus group discussion was poor performance leading to forceful repetition especially in single sex boarding schools where the students are forced to repeat by the teachers so that their school could be in a good position when they do Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education Examinations. In fact one of the District Quality Assurance and Standard Officer said, "Performance has played a big role because the parents and the teachers ensure that if the children do not perform well they are forced to repeat so that they can do better and also to ensure the school mean is high". The Director of Studies and students also mentioned largely that the issue of performance had affected the repetition rates in the county despite the introduction of Free Secondary Education policy which was meant to counter it. A student mentioned that their schools they have devised ways of making the students repeat despite the government policy against it. The student said, "Whenever some students perform below the school standard their parents are called to sign in form two that if they do not meet the target in form three they should repeat leaving them with no option but repeat form three or form two because they will affect the school means score." There was also another student who said, "When we did not perform well in class our parents are called and asked to take us to another schools or sign a form stating that they

want their child to repeat and the student is given a similar form to sign. This leaves us with no option but to repeat suggesting that fees were no longer a big burden as Free Secondary Education was in place". This shows that school in the county still make their students repeat despite the government policy that the children should be allowed to proceed to avoid wastage due to high repetition rates in form three and form four. This seems to happen because the schools want their schools to excel as compared to the other schools. This is in agreement with the findings by Musyimi (2011) in Makueni County which revealed that repetition was caused by poor performance and forced repetition.

School levies despite Free Secondary Education policy was also indicated by all the Director of Studies and largely by the students as a factor influencing repetition. The students believe that it has led to their repetition since every time they are sent home they miss out on syllabus coverage; this makes them perform poorly leading to repetition. In fact one of the students during focused group discussion said, "We were always sent home in spite Free Secondary Education policy being in place to get money during the term and we end up losing a lot in class leading to some of us repeating." School levies is one of the major contributors of repetition. For instance Free Secondary Education policy caters for only 40.43% of the required levies by the day scholars while parents cater for 59.57%. Parents with children who are boarders in mixed school cater for 72.60% while government pays 27.40%. For the single sex schools the girls and the boys' schools the government caters for 25.62% and 24.88%, while the parents cater for 74.38% and 75.12% for girls' and boys' schools respectively (Table 4.6). This finding is in agreement with the studies done by ILO (2010) in Kwale District which revealed that one of the reasons which influence repetition was lack of funds.

Indiscipline is also another factor that was indicated largely by all the District Quality Assurance and Standard Officers and Directors of Studies when they were interviewed. They believed that since students were sent home for disciplinary cases especially the boys they missed a lot leading to poor performance and finally repetition. During the students' focus group discussion a student said, "Indiscipline led to repetition since those students who were not disciplined were always sent home because of mistakes and they also lack concentration in class leading to repetition". This is an indication that indiscipline played a role in influencing repetition despite Free Secondary Education policy being in place. Students transfer from school to school despite Free Secondary Education policy, was mentioned by all the District Quality Assurance and Standard Officers and Director of studies during the interview that it has also led to repetition. The students also during their focus group discussion mentioned that the students who come from different schools always come and repeat a class in their schools. A Director of Studies explained that, "Some parents kept transferring their children from one school to another and it affected the continuity of the child in terms of syllabus coverage because schools are not at par when it comes to the syllabus coverage". This shows that transfer has an influence on repetition in secondary schools, because as the students struggle to fit in their new schools some repeat in the process.

Pregnancy and boy/girl relationship was also mentioned as influencing repetition especially in day schools. All the District Quality Assurance and Standard Officer, groups of students and Director of Studies all mentioned that it has influenced repetition in secondary schools because out of these relationships the girls are the ones who face the consequences. In fact one of the Director of Studies said, "the students who engage in boy/girl relationship always lack concentration in class leading to poor performance. Others get pregnant making most girls drop out and when they get back to school they repeat their former classes". The District Quality Assurance and Standard Officer and the students gave the same factor as influencing the girls' education more than the boys. This is in agreement with the findings by Musyimi (2011) in Makueni County which revealed that repetition was caused by teenage pregnancies. This is in agreement with the studies done by ILO (2010) in Kwale District which revealed that reasons for reasons which leads to repetition was pregnancies due to weddings and funerals that take long. Family responsibilities were indicated by all the District Quality Assurance and Standard Officer, Director of Studies and students during interview and focus group discussion pointed out largely as one of the factors affecting the girls. This makes them absent from school missing out on the syllabus coverage and makes them not perform well in class like their colleagues who are in school the whole time. Due to this most of the girls are forced to repeat to learn what they had missed out. For instance a Director of Studies said, "When a family member is sick especially a parent the girls take up the family responsibilities. The girls are asked to take care of the sick and also provide for the entire family making them not perform well in school leading repetition this is common in day schools". This finding is in agreement with the findings of studies done by ILO (2010) in Kwale District which revealed that reasons which leads to repetition was domestic work which has led them not to perform well in their academic work.

Drug abuse was also mentioned by all the Director of Studies and District Quality Assurance and Standard Officers as affecting the students especially the boys and a few girls. This mainly affects the boys' performance in school making them repeat a class because of this poor performance which negates the purpose of Free Secondary Education policy. The Director of Studies talked of quite a number of boys who were sent home in form three and four because of drug abuse. This explains why the repetition is high in the upper class especially among the boys. In fact one of the Director of Studies in one of the schools said, "I was a class teacher in one of the classes in that



cohort and I had students who were struggling with drug abuse and they had not been performing well leading to them repeating." This is in agreement with the findings by Musyimi (2011) in Makueni County which revealed that repetition was caused drug abuse. Students' attitude towards their studies has influenced repetition in spite of Free Secondary Education policy due to poor performance in school. This was mentioned by the entire District Quality Assurance and Standard Officer and Director of Studies during interview. Attitude made the students to hate school, some even their teachers and eventually because of these it led to poor performance and finally repetition despite Free Secondary Education policy. This came up clearly also during the students focused group discussion. One of the District Quality Assurance and Standard Officer said, Attitude influenced both the boys and the girls in secondary schools despite Free Secondary Education policy whereby they tend to develop a negative attitude towards certain subjects affecting their overall grades hence poor performance leading to repetition. We have always tried to discourage repetition but there are still a number of schools who do it against the regulations. This is in agreement with the findings by Musyimi (2011) in Makueni County which revealed that repetition was caused students attitude.

Absenteeism was also mentioned by all the Director of Studies and students as one of the factors leading to repetition. This is was common during the beginning of the term whereby some students do not come to school so as to avoid entry examinations. This makes them perform poorly at the end of the term. A director of studies from one of the boys' school said, "in spite of Free Secondary Education policy the boys did not come to school at the beginning of the term because they had not prepared for the entry exam and this made some of them perform poorly at the end of the year leading to repetition." This shows that there were students who deliberately stayed away from school making them perform poorly. This was due to lack of preparation on the side of the students during their holidays. This is in agreement with the findings by Musyimi (2011) in Makueni County which revealed that repetition was caused by chronic absenteeism. This is in agreement with the studies done by ILO (2010) in Kwale District which revealed that one of the reasons which lead to repetition was absenteeism.

Sickness was also another factor that has led to repetition despite Free Secondary Education policy being in place. This was mentioned by all the Director of Studies and students during the interview and focus group discussion respectively. They mentioned that there are students who have been sick most days of the term making them miss out on syllabus coverage, with time these students repeat because they are not at par with the rest of the class. This finding concur the study done in western Kenya by Achoka (2007) which revealed that HIV/AIDS influence wastage. This finding is in agreement with the studies done by ILO (2010) in Kwale District which revealed that reasons which lead to repetition were sickness. The other factor mentioned by some students was lack of school uniform, books and inadequate teachers. These factors do not contribute much to repetition in Kericho County. The interview and focus group discussion findings were crucial in this study as they helped to verify the correlation output which indicated that Free Secondary Education policy had very low influence on repeater rates. Thus they indicated that there were other factors that highly influenced repetition of students. These factors included; students attitude, sickness, poor academic performance, school policy on academic performance and motor bike business. These factors seem to have had stronger influence than Free Secondary Education policy on repetition of students.

It is important to note that education, children and security are inseparable variables in society. Children grow up in several environments. Home, school and community are the settings for social and intellectual experiences from which they acquire and develop the skills, attitudes and attachments which characterizes them as individuals and shape their choice and performance of adult roles.

## CONCLUSION

Free Secondary Education policy had little positive influence on repetition in Kericho County and accounted for only 0.16% increase of repeater rate. Interview findings further revealed that Free Secondary Education policy did not have much influence on repetition rates.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the finding that Free Secondary Education policy had a weak positive influence on repeater rates, since it accounted for 0.16% of the variation and other factors such as poor academic achievement, student absenteeism, school fees/levies, forced repetition, indiscipline accounted for 99.84% the study recommended that:

- i) The government policy that; no child should be forced to repeat a class should be enforced. This would reduce cases of repetition in schools as it does not add value but only increases wastage rate and reduces internal efficiency of schools.
- ii) Academic guidance and counseling be strengthened in schools so that students can easily transit from one class to another. This would curb repetition rates in schools in the county.
- iii) Principals and parents should work hand in hand to ensure that students report to schools on time and stay in the school throughout the term. This would help the students to concentrate on their studies and develop qualities of successful students thereby performing well and being disciplined with the consequences that repetition due to poor performance is void.

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