

Education plays a significant function in national development as well as influencing the socio-economic growth of any given country. The government of Kenya has made a significant milestone in ensuring a 100% transition of students from primary to secondary schools so as to increase access to basic education for all children. However, despite this effort, most transit learners are not retained in secondary schools. Regardless of this effort, most of the learners who transit are not retained in secondary schools. The purpose of this study was to determine the influence of sociological factors on students' retention in public secondary schools in Maara Sub- County. The study aimed at establishing family, school and peer related factors that influence students' retention in public secondary schools in Maara Sub-county. The study adopted the involvement and structural functionalism theories. The target population was 22,105 involving 21,834 students, 216 class teachers, 54 head teachers and the Sub county education officer (SCEO). A sample size of 393 respondents including 360 students, 24 class teachers, eight principals and the Maara Sub county education officer was used in this study. Data collection was done using questionnaires and interviews. Piloting was done in Meru South sub-county since it had similar characteristic and also due to proximity. A total of 40 respondents was selected for piloting. To ensure validity of the research instruments, the researcher sought the opinions of experts in the field of study. Descriptive and inferential statistics was used to analyze the data with the aid of Scientific Package for Social Sciences version 25.0. Reliability of the instruments was estimated by use of Cronbach alpha method. Descriptive statistics were used for measures of central tendencies including mean and standard deviation. Research hypotheses was tested using Chi square at a significance level of  $\alpha = 0.05$ . The analyzed data was presented by use of tables and figures. This study established that students from families whose parents had education, income and small in size were likely to be retained in school. Schools with adequate facilities and resources, guidance and counselling services and positive teacher–student relationship promoted students' retention. Students with acceptable discipline and behavior completed their studies. It was concluded that commendable family, school and peer related factors had significant influence on students' retention. Based on the findings of this study, the researcher recommends parental level of education, level of income, small size of family as well as families with authoritative parenting style to influence students' retention. There is need for adequate physical facilities, resources, guidance and counselling, positive teacher-student relationship, disciplined students in schools as well as ensuring more sponsorships and bursaries for the needy students to improve the retention rates. It is hoped that the findings of this study may provide useful information to curriculum developers, implementers, planners, policy makers and other stakeholders on influence of family, school and peer related factors on students' retention in public secondary schools.