

School Safety and Its Influence on Teaching and Learning Processes in Public Secondary Schools in Nairobi and Nyeri Counties, Kenya

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Abstract

School safety is crucial for effective teaching and learning. It provides an opportunity for students to exploit and maximize their potential for learning, growth and development. An unsafe school environment; however, has a negative influence on student's performance. Governments worldwide have put in place policies and programmes to ensure school safety yet, cases of unsafe conditions in schools continue to disrupt teaching and learning. The purpose of this study, therefore, was to determine the status of school safety and its influence on teaching and learning processes in Public Secondary Schools in Nairobi and Nyeri counties, Kenya. This is meant to inform the re-mapping of safety standards and guidelines in Kenya for enhanced teaching and learning in public schools. The study was guided by the following research objectives: To assess the status of physical infrastructure safety in public secondary schools in Nairobi and Nyeri counties; To assess the status of social environment safety in public secondary schools in Nairobi and Nyeri counties; To establish the influence of physical infrastructure safety on teaching and learning processes in public secondary schools in Nairobi and Nyeri counties, To establish the influence of social environment safety on teaching and learning processes in public secondary schools in Nairobi and Nyeri counties and To seek suggestions from respondents on ways school safety can be enhanced to promote teaching and learning. This study used a descriptive survey design and targeted all (293) Public Secondary Schools in Nairobi and Nyeri Counties, their Principals and Deputy Principals, all (50155) form 2&3 students and (2) County Quality Assurance & Standards officers from the areas of the study. The Sample was obtained through stratified random sampling where these schools were categorized according to Boys Boarding, Girls boarding and Mixed schools according to the two counties. Students' Sample was obtained through proportionate simple random sampling from each stratum. The sample was three hundred and eighty-three (383) form 2 & 3 students, forty-four (44) Principals, and forty-four (44) Deputy Principals. Two (2) County Quality Assurance & Standards officers were also included in the sample purposively. Data collection instruments included; Students', Deputy Principals' and Principals' school safety questionnaire, interview guide for the County Quality Assurance and Standards Officers and an observation guide. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics while qualitative data was analyzed using thematic analysis. Quantitative data was presented using frequency tables, percentages and figures while qualitative data was presented using narratives and voiced verbatim. The findings showed school physical infrastructure facilities were not safe as many schools had not adjusted the doors and windows of classrooms and other school facilities as per the requirements of the safety standards manual. The findings further showed that school safety greatly influenced teaching and learning processes in schools. Failure to follow guidelines when providing for school facilities and ignoring social environment issues, greatly influence negatively teaching and learning processes. The study recommends that the government, through the ministry of education enforce compliance to safety Manual for schools, re-structure the teacher training curriculum, include emerging issues in the school curriculum and increase allocation of resources to ensure schools adhere to the Ministry of Education Safety guidelines, particularly on physical infrastructure and school social environment, as these influence teaching and learning processes.

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