

Relationship between School Climate and Students' Subject Choice in Public Secondary Schools in Nairobi County, Kenya

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Abstract

School climate is the collective characteristic of an organization-the overall atmosphere that one senses on entering a school. It is the quality of the character of school life based on patterns of students, parents and school administration. It has three essential dimensions, Physical, Social and Academic which all impacts on students' subject choice. Subject choice is crucial in the life of students because the choice they make determine the career path they shall pursue in life. It is in a school that a learner acquires norms, values and expectations that enable them make the right choice. This is the essence of this study which sought to establish whether there is significant relationship between school climate and students' subject choice in public secondary schools in Kenya. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. It was done in Nairobi County which had 79 public secondary schools, 79 principals, 316 Heads of academic department and 10,920 Form Three students. Out of this target population, 30 public secondary schools were sampled randomly to get 30 principals. Purposive sampling was used to select 120 Heads of academic department and 390 Form Three students. The instruments for data collection were questionnaires for principals, teachers and Form Three students and observation check list. Data collected was coded and computed with the help of SPSS version 18 to get means, frequencies, percentages and Standard Deviations for qualitative data. Analysis was done using Pearson's Chi square test and One Way ANOVAs for quantitative data. The study revealed that there was significant relationship between school climate and students' subject choice at a p-value of .041 which was less than the level of significance of .05. In view of the study findings, it was recommended that the Ministry of education should formulate follow up guidelines that would encourage instructional leaders to create positive school climate that would enhance wholesome development of students in secondary schools so that acquired skills of decision making can enable them to make informed decisions on subject choice. The study findings are additional knowledge in the field of Education.