

## **THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF MARSABIT ON STUDENTS' RETENTION IN SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MARSABIT COUNTY– KENYA**

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### **ABSTRACT**

**Purpose of the Study:** This study sought to establish the contribution of the Catholic Diocese of Marsabit on students' retention in selected schools in Marsabit County. Catholic Diocese of Marsabit has contributed tremendously in the development of education sector in Marsabit because many of the government schools in Marsabit were established and built by the Catholic Church. Despite the effort made by the Church to enable pastoralist children get equal opportunity for education with other parts of Kenya, many children are engaged in pastoralist activities such as looking after livestock. This lack of school attendance has highlighted the need for students' retention in school. Two research questions and Tinto's theory of students' retention guided the study.

**Statement of the Problem:** Despite the effort of the government of Kenya, the Catholic Church and other Non-Government Organization, retention of students in secondary schools in Marsabit County remains as challenge because the pastoralist communities have not yet seen the importance of education.

**Research Methodology:** This study adopted convergent parallel mixed method design. The target secondary schools, principals, teachers, students and county education directors in Marsabit County. Both probability and non-probability sampling was used to establish the samples for the study. 400 respondents were sampled from the target population of 2,000 in four of 12 Catholic sponsored secondary schools in Marsabit County. The respondents comprised of 4 principals, 16 teachers, 16 parents and 364 students. Simple random sampling as part of probability sampling was employed to select the students, teachers and parents from the 4

selected secondary schools, while non-probability sampling mainly purposive sampling was used to sample the principals. Questionnaires and interview guides were used as the main data collection tools. The instruments' validity and reliability was tested through test-retest technique. A pilot study was carried out in two of the Catholic sponsored secondary schools within an interval of one month. Data analysis was done through mixed method analysis whereby quantitative data analyzed through statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) while, data from qualitative interviews was analyzed and presented in a thematic-narrative form.

**Findings:** The study established that the Catholic Diocese of Marsabit through its sponsorship and donations, educational program like leadership training program and services such as guiding and counseling played a big role in enhancing students' retention in Catholic sponsored secondary schools.

**Conclusion and Recommendations:** going by the findings of the study, it was concluded that, the Catholic Diocese of Marsabit was undeniable champion and promoter of education in the County because through its initiatives programs, almost all the students who were enrolled in school were retained till the completion of secondary level. The study recommended that other faith-based organizations to be in the forefront in promoting students' retention in school. It further suggested that the government to invest a lot in sensitizing the pastoralist communities about the importance of education and the needs for students' retention in secondary school. In addition, the study suggested that, the school heads to come up with programs that can help in retention of students in secondary schools. The study recommended further researches to be conducted to establish the challenges of students' retention in secondary schools.

**Keywords:** *Retention, Student, Motivation, Programs, Sponsorship, Donations, Guiding, Counseling, Leadership, Performance.*

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## BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Retention of students in schools has not only been a challenge to the African continents but also to other continents like America as reported by Berger & Lyon (2005) whereby many students were unable to complete school. For the last few years, students' retention has become a big business for researchers, educators and entrepreneurs but not much has been achieved which led to several organizations wanting to promote the increase of institutional retention rate (Tinto, 2007). Hagedorn, (2006) asserts that retention and dropout are two sides of the same coin whereby by retention is staying in school till completion of a degree while dropout is leaving the school prematurely. Student retention is the act of making the learners to remain in one class without being promoted to the next class (Jane 2008). According to Jane retaining students in the same class for long contributes to school dropout. On the other hand, Meador (2018) holds that grade retention has a positive effect on the student because the failing students are given a chance familiarize with the contents. In order to enhance students' retention, (Crosling, et al., 2009) suggested that the teachers to find out what can influence students' retention by engaging students in the learning process, understanding the diversity of students which include the family background, interests and aspirations. Retention of students in school has to be encouraged at all means given that dropouts cost the nation millions of in lost wages and taxes, welfare, benefits and costs associated to criminal activities (Martin & Halperin, 2006). Murugan & Badawi (2020) addresses the problem of students' retention by proposing eight ways to increase student retention in higher education which include making great the first impression, closely

monitoring, use of social media, clear feedback, texting and WhatsApp, inspiring students, use of retention centres and addressing at 'risk' students early. For the purpose of this study, student retention is understood as the persistence and the act of the student remaining in school till the completion secondary school level culminated by the sitting for KCSE.

The statistics from NCES (2018) shows that 2.1 million students aged 16-24 dropped out of school in America. Looking at the education state in Sub-Saharan Africa, a study by Inoue, et al. (2015) revealed that within the next decade about 40 million students will drop out. Another statistic from the records of the County Government of Marsabit shows that dropout rate in secondary schools in the county is 10 percent due to cultural practices. These findings paint a picture that students' retention in school to be of great concern to any learning institution since it is the key to the attainment of knowledge and necessary skills which are not only important to schools but the entire country of Kenya and the world over. Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states clearly that, everyone has the right to education (UNESCO, 1998).

To implement the universal declaration, something has to be done to address what hinders retention of students in schools such as the poverty index in the country, retrogressive cultural practices in some communities and the peer influence amongst the young people. To facilitate the achievement of the universal declaration, the government of Kenya came up with education subsidization programs such as Free Primary Education (FPE) in 2003, Free Day Secondary School Education (FDSE) in 2013, Constituency Development Fund (CDF) in 2003, bursary, scholarships, provision of teaching and learning material and grants aimed on increasing transition and retention rates (RoK, 2008; Masimbwa, 2010).

In the spirit of shared responsibility in making sure that the universal declaration was met, a number of NGOs have chipped in to give a hand on retention of students in secondary schools particularly in the ASAL counties where Marsabit County belongs. Despite the many government policies and the effort by various NGOs to help in the retention of students in secondary schools, still there are worrying numbers of students who terminate studies prematurely in Marsabit County to be specific. Going by the statistics presented by UNICEF (2012) it shows that, more than 1.2 million primary school-age children do not attend school. For instance, in the year 2015-2016, ASAL Counties of Garissa, Marsabit, Mandera, Wajir, Turkana and Samburu registered less than 56 per cent compared to 97.5 per cent in other regions (UNICEF Kenya, 2018). Many pastoralist communities such as those in Marsabit County do not value education; specifically, girl child education (Muyaka, 2018; Saadia, 2015; Njeri, 2014). This negative attitude towards the girl child education has contributed immensely to low retention of girls in schools. Other factors such as low education level of the parents, household poverty, retrogressive cultural practices, long distances to school, drug abuse, peer pressures and ignorance on the value of formal education has also contributed to general low retention of girls and boys in school. Thus many school going children do not have a chance to attain formal education due to low education level of the parents, household poverty, retrogressive cultural practices and little interest attached to formal education as reported by Orodho, et al. (2013). These communities do not emphasize on formal education as they do to informal/ traditional education which prepares boys to become herds-boys and girls to be good house wives and mothers (Nyamongo, 2000).

The Church involvement in education is critical given that some years back the Church's mission was synonymous with education since the Church understood school as a place where pupils

could be nurtured spiritually and morally (Onjoro, 2013). The role of the Church in education has a long history for she takes the first step in offering education to underprivileged sections of the society such as the unreachable and women (Somasekhar, 1970). Due to the support and the quality of education offered in the Catholic high schools, 99% of the students graduate and of those 86% proceed to colleges (McDonald and Schultz, 2016). The role of the Church in education is evident because the world finest religious and secular leaders have been educated by the Church (Jansen, et al. 2009). The involvement of religion in students' affairs has a significant contribution on academic achievement (Byfield, 2008). The Catholic Church across the globe has helped in the retention of students in secondary schools through various ways. For example, according to (Gardiner, 2020) in the Washington D.C metropolitan area in USA when the Catholics schools were closing down and students dropping out of schools, the Catholic Church there came up with a plan to sustain schools and students. It enhanced student retention by establishing coordinated Catholic leadership at different levels so as to bring internal and organizational structures in those schools. The church further, embarked on promoting community involvement, seeking professional advice and focus on public relation. In UK, despite the fact that student enrolment has been declining over the years, the Catholic Church has helped retention of students in school. A report by Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales (2014) indicates that the Catholic Church works in close partnership with the government to ensure children get education.

Over the years the Church has played a significant role in the development and provision of education in Africa (Sifuna, 1990). Education in Africa was brought about by the Portuguese who after arriving in East and West African coast as explorers realized their children needed education and therefore build schools (Sifuna, et al., 2006). Likewise, when the Catholic Church landed in Marsabit, it got involved in education sector to give many pastoralist children a chance to attend school. It also sought to enhance students' academic achievement since the Church is a social neighborhood that reduces youth's risks and promotes academic success (Frank, et al., 1999). The alarming number of the school dropout in Marsabit County prompted the Catholic Diocese of Marsabit to tirelessly support education sector so as to promote retention of students in secondary schools given that Church has a mission to offer good, quality and valuable knowledge to the people of God (Maeve, 2011). To curb this worrying trend, of school dropout and absenteeism, the Catholic diocese of Marsabit came up with strategies and programs to promote quality education and enhancement of students' retention.

The challenges of school dropout and low retention rate of students in Marsabit County are brought about by drug abuse, peer pressure, poverty, cultural practices and economic instability, hostile environment, insecurity and constant conflicts among the pastoralist communities in the County that do not favor education (Hunqe, 2001; Muyaka, 2018). Miraa business management also is a threat to retention of students in secondary since because many children are engaged in miraa picking and transportation to the business centers (Halakhe, 2019).

The Catholic Church in Marsabit County has contributed immensely in the development of education in the region like any other Catholic Church elsewhere across the globe (Barasa & Misati, 2012). The Catholic Diocese of Marsabit controls over 80% of the schools in Marsabit County through sponsorship. The diocese owns two Catholic primary schools (St. John Paul II and Fr. John Memorial) and two Catholic secondary schools (St. Paul for boys and Bishop Cavallera for girls). In order to ensure that both boys and girls get access to educational opportunities, pastoral and health care, diocese established parishes where the communities

together with the students receive the necessary assistance and this has largely contributed to students' retention (Ruto, et al., 2019). Through the Caritas Marsabit and Catholic Relief Services (CRS), the needy students are able to get food stuff, financial aid in terms of fee payment to sponsored students, other resources and materials such as boarding facilities in a number of schools to make sure that the learners are retained in school and that they are not affected by migration as reported by Mburu (2017). This aid facilitates to academic performance, attention in the class and retention of students in school (Ltobuko, 2013). As a follow up and sensitization on the importance of education, the catholic Diocese of Marsabit offers leadership training program to secondary schools. The youth office records of 2019 shows that the leadership program have helped in the increase of students' retention in secondary schools in the school it is offered as compared to other school where the program is yet to be offered. The said leadership program offers services like guiding and counseling which are necessary for the reduction of absenteeism and school dropout rate as reported from the studies by Kampicha (2013) and Galgallo (2014). It also helps the students who are stressed due to cultural practices such as early marriage and child labour (Neiekerk, 2009).

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

No student joins school with the intention of dropping before completion, nonetheless, some drop on the way due to several reasons which calls for retention. Students' failure to complete secondary school level in many public secondary schools is undeniable phenomenon in Marsabit County which calls for special attention. Statistics from the Ministry of Education of 2019 shows that Marsabit County had the lowest gross enrolment rate (GER) of 17.9 in secondary schools as compared to Tharaka Nithi which had 132.8 (MoE, 2019). The statistics further indicate rapid drop in enrolment across the education levels in Marsabit County with a GER 69.0 in Pre-primary level, 54.8 in Primary level and 17.9 in secondary level (MoE, 2019). This decline of enrolment in primary and secondary levels clearly shows that student retention in school is a challenge in Marsabit County. If student retention is not given attention, Marsabit County will end up with a big illiterate population. To address this challenge, the Catholic diocese of Marsabit intervened by sponsoring construction of numerous schools in the County as well as offering financial and material support to the needy students. For sensitization on students' retention diocese initiated leadership training program to be offered to the Catholic schools namely, St. Paul Boys Secondary School and Bishop Cavallera Girls Secondary School. The program seems to have attracted a lot liking and has a high demand from other public schools. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate on retention by establishing the contribution of the Catholic Diocese of Marsabit on students' retention in Marsabit County.

### **RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The study was guided by two objectives:

- (i) To determine the contribution of the Church initiated education programs on students' retention in selected secondary schools in Marsabit County.
- (ii) To find out the extent to which sponsorship and donations by the Catholic diocese of Marsabit has contributed on retention of students in secondary schools in Marsabit County.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

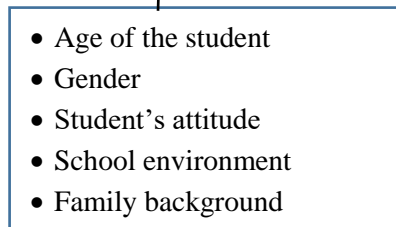
- i) What is the contribution of Church initiated education programs on student retention in secondary schools in Marsabit?
- ii) How has the Catholic Diocese of Marsabit sponsorship and donations contributed on retention of students in secondary schools in Marsabit?

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

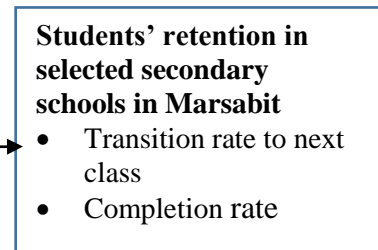
### Independent Variables



### Intervening Variables



### Dependent Variable



**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework.**

Source: Researcher (2021)

## REVIEW OF THEORIES

### Tinto's Theory of Student Retention

Tinto's student retention theory is simply known as 'Tinto's Theory' (Tinto, 1993). Tinto's theory identifies academic difficulties, the inability of the individuals to resolve their educational and occupational goals, and their failure to become or remain incorporated in the intellectual and social life of the institution as the three major reasons why a student departs from school. On the reasons for students leaving school, Tinto says that prior to education a student possesses attributes such as family background, skills and abilities which influence their choices and commitment (Tinto, 1975). For the student to remain in school, Tinto held that, the students need integration into formal (academic performance) and informal (staff interactions) academic system and formal (extracurricular activities and informal (peer group interaction) social systems. Tinto's theory presents three dimensions of institutional action: (i) defining dropout from higher education, (ii) the principles of effective retention and (iii) principles effective implementation.

On defining the dropout as an individual and institutional failure, Tinto says that institutions should not define dropout in the way that contradicts the students' own understanding of their leaving school and that in the course of establishing a retention policy, institutions must not only ascertain the goal and commitments of students but also discern their own goals and commitments. The principles of effective retention stipulate that retention program should be aimed on the students they serve, education for all, and the social and educational community. On the other hand, the principles of effective implementation, Tinto says that institutions should provide resources for program development and incentives for the program participation, commitment to a long term process of the program development and put all the efforts on student retention. The strength of Tinto's theory, the theory provided a heuristic and theoretical framework for understanding student behavior (Kember, 1995). I am in agreement with Kember given that the theory was keen in measuring and distinguishing different reasons of students dropping out of school namely academic performance, environmental and social integration in an institution. Moreover, the theory led to the development of a longitudinal, explanatory model of departure (Tinto, 1993), who argues that a student departing from school before completion arises due to skills, financial resources, prior education experiences, personal dispositions and interactions with other members of the academic and social systems of the learning institution. The weakness of Tinto's theory is that the theory was not concrete because it kept on developing into different models such a Student retention literature, explanatory model of departure etc.

Tinto's student retention theory was relevant for this study because it highlighted on three reasons which makes students to drop out school namely: the academic difficulties, the inability of the students to resolve their educational and occupational goals, and the failure to become or remain incorporated in the intellectual and social life of an institution which calls for students' retention. This study sought to establish the contribution of the Catholic Diocese of Marsabit on students' retention in secondary school. The involvement of the Catholic Church the education sector touches the aspects of academic systems and social systems whereby the learners are sensitized on the importance of being throughout in school for academic excellence and involvement in social affairs like extracurricular activities and peer group interactions help to boost growth and development as a person which as highlighted by Tinto (1993), that adjustment, goals, commitment, finances, incongruence isolation and community integration as some of the factors leading to school dropout, the church intervention seems to address some of these factors through, sponsorship, donations, offering guidance and counseling services as well as organizing programs for the students and parents.

### **Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory**

Hierarchy of Needs theory (Maslow, 1945, 1954, 1970) is a motivational theory mostly used in psychology. This theory was originally a five-tier model of human needs which Maslow expanded to an eight-tier model by including cognitive, aesthetic and transcendence needs. The model is presented in hierarchical levels within a pyramid whereby Maslow argues that the lower needs (deficiency needs) should be satisfied before an individual thinks of the higher needs (growth/ being needs). The hierarchy of needs comprises of: 1. *Biological and Psychological needs* (air, food, drink, shelter, warmth, sleep etc), 2. *Safety needs* (security, protection from elements, order, law, stability and freedom from fear. 3. *Love and belonging needs* (friendship, intimacy, trust, affection, acceptance and affiliation). 4. *Esteem needs* (esteem for oneself – dignity, achievement, mastery, independence, and esteem for reputation / respect from others – status, prestige). 5. *Cognitive needs* (knowledge, understanding, curiosity, exploration, search for

meaning and predictability). 6. *Aesthetic needs* (appreciation and search for beauty, body shape, balance and form). 7. *Self-actualization* (realizing personal potential, self-fulfillment, seeking personal growth, peak experiences and desire to become what one wills). 8. *Transcendence needs* (through values a person goes beyond the self - mystical experiences, aesthetic experiences, sexual experiences, service to others, pursuit of science and religion)

Maslow's hierarchy of need theory was mainly used in Psychology but later adopted in Education due to its contribution in teaching and classroom management in schools. Maslow argued that before student's cognitive needs can be met, first the basic psychological needs should be fulfilled for example; students should be given food before being taught in class because no one can study on an empty stomach. Again, in a classroom the learners should feel secure and accepted for them to be in a good position to acquire the required knowledge. The learners ought to feel valued, respected and encouraged to respect others in the class for good relationship and belongingness. Like any other theory, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory has strengths and weaknesses. I concur with O'Connor & Yballe (2007) who merits Maslow theory, due to its intuitive nature as one that supports practitioners. The theory gives a summary of the human needs for integral growth of an individual. One of the weaknesses of Maslow's theory is that it is not empirically testable to ascertain the rate at which the lower needs are being satisfied and when to move to the higher needs is weakness. The weakness of Maslow's can be mitigated by ascertaining that the lower needs are satisfactorily met and allow the individual to slowly transit to the higher needs. For instance, the Catholic diocese of Marsabit offering material and financial support enables the families to meet the basic needs of their children hence enabling them to seek higher needs such as education.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory was relevant and useful in this study in the sense that, it is a motivational theory that presents and explains the human needs that ought to be met for an individual to progress. Needs like: food, water, shelter, education, security, appreciation and respect are crucial to students' retention in schools. The Catholic Diocese of Marsabit has made tremendous efforts to address these needs in several ways: it has contributed to the material and financial needs of the students; it has provided the training program that has met some higher needs like love and self-esteem. Through the provision of finances and food program, the lower needs of students such as food, shelter, clothing and water are met. On the other hand, the leadership training provides knowledge and skills and guiding and counseling that help in fulfilling the students' higher-level needs such as desire for further knowledge and skills. The fulfillment of such needs make the learners to be retained in school.

## **EMPIRICAL LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Contribution of Church Leadership Programs, Guiding and Counselling Services on Retention of Students in Secondary Schools**

Retention of learners in both secondary schools and primary schools it is very important for the learners to complete their studies and attain their educational goals which call for the school administrations to find the best mechanisms to ensure students retention. Good results motivate the learners to want to be in school throughout hence enhancement of retention of students in school. Motivational programs such as leadership training programs and guiding and counseling services can do much in boosting students' retention in secondary schools. Motivational programs carried by the church in schools helps on personal reflection and holistic development of the students which heightens the respect of beliefs and cohesion in the school community



(Byrne 2014). The Catholic diocese of Marsabit has over the years offered motivational programs, guiding and counseling services to schools under its sponsorship. Several scholars are in agreement that school managements should encourage educational programs in their schools for they found these programs to have a lot of impacts on student attainment of educational goals and students' retention in school. These programs by and large help the learners to develop a sense of self control and self-efficiency as well as development of a sense of civic responsibility and ethnic identity (Gullan, Power & Leff, 2013). A study on 'Variables affecting the retention intention of students in higher education institutions by Matti, Kai, & McLaughlin (2020) suggested that the institution to have programs to equip students with study skills, time management and peer coaching. Nduyo (2013), in his study noted that Church organized programs have a positive impact on students' retention. The study found out that through empowerment programs such as leadership skills, sex education, and career formation skills among other topics helped in the retention of youth in the church.

Students actively involvement in religious activities is not a waste of time and non-academic as many people may see it. A study by Douglas & Raymond (1986) on 'Religion and delinquency: Cutting through the Maze' found out that Church activities and programs positively affected school attendance and the ability of the students to manage their time well hence reducing the school dropout rate. This was echoed by Mark & Glen (2003) who held that when students regularly attend religious activities there is high chances of registering good results and attainment of high grades. Glanville, et al. (2008) equally concurred with Douglas & Raymond's findings, that student who frequently participated in religious activities attained high grades as compared to those who did not take part. The same was echoed by Esmeralda et al. (2016) who found out that religious attendance in religious services was positively associated with educational expectation. Actively participation in religious activities gives the students the skills and motivation to work hard and take seriously their school work with the aim of attaining good grades hence students' retention.

### **The impact of the Church Sponsorship and Donations on Student Retention**

Today the idea of sponsorship is understood differently than yester years, apart from maintaining and fostering religious traditions, sponsorship is taken to mean financial and material support to the needy. This concept stems from charity traditional culture of the Church to help the needy and elevate the oppressed (Grace, 2011). The Church as a sponsor in many learning institutions ensures that the students not only go to school but also adhere to what is expected in the school as stipulated in the Kenya Catholic Education Policy (2000) which holds that children attend school to acquire education therefore need for good study habits. Many learners across the globe are unable to complete their studies due to lack of money and basic materials such as food, stationary, among other things. A study by Njeru (2013), found out that Marsabit County has been lagging behind in education because the people are unable to offer quality formal education to their children and that sponsorship and donation has played a vital role in addressed the problem. From a meta-analysis study by Jeyne (2008) on 'The effects of catholic and protestant schools' academic performance' showed that academic performance of students from catholic and protestant schools were far better than of their counterparts in public schools since the sponsor provides the necessary requirement. A study by Makhanu (2018) on 'Influence of religious sponsorship on academic performance by protestant and Catholic secondary schools in Kenya: A comparative study in Trans-Nzoia County, Kenya clearly showed that academic performance of students in religious sponsored schools was recommendable.

Lack of sponsorship to needy students leads to students dropping out of schools as established by Kamundi (2021), who carried out a study on ‘Student retention in secondary school of Seventh-day Adventist Church in East Kenya Union Conference’. Using a concurrent mixed method design guided by expectant theory, Kamundi’s study found out there were high numbers of drop out in form 2 and form 3 could affect the learning process and students’ academic performance. The study recommended that bursaries and sponsorship of the needy to student to be availed so as to enable retention of students from poor in the school. A study by Ngeiywa (2014) on ‘Influence of donor funding on development of secondary education...’ found out that the church assisted a lot in the construction of school buildings and offering sponsorship to bright students from humble backgrounds which by and large enhanced retention of students in secondary schools. Yirashe (2000) was in with Ngeiywa (2014) when he established from his study that the Catholic diocese of Marsabit has continued to support education through the establishment and construction of boarding schools for easy retention of students and giving financial support to ensure that the schools are run smoothly and to enable learners especially girl child to get education. Another study by Muoki, (2017), establishes that through the sponsorship and donation from the Catholic Church many children have been retained in school since the Church has the mechanism to oversee development and success of the schools as well as spiritual development of the students. Githinji, (2012), in his study found out that sponsorship has a great influence and impact on students’ retention in schools when the amount given is able to cater for the need of the learner and that of the family. When the student’s needs are met through sponsorship, the educational outcome is improved as discovered by (Barnes, 2015).

It is undeniable fact that financial support contributes a lot in enhancing the number of student who make it through to the end of the course as noted by Frida, Nduku & Ntabo (2020). Looking at the influence of sponsorship program, Gachanja (2012) found out that the amount of funds given through sponsorship influenced the pupils’ retention rate in primary schools in Mutomo district, Kitui county and suggested that the sponsoring organization increase the amount of sponsorship to cater for the aspect of pupil’s needs. Lombo (2019), whose study advocated for a long lasting solution to curb school dropout through funding for school resources was in total agreement with Gachanja. Sponsorship and donations from the Church assist in educating the people and helping them to integrate education in their culture since it contributes to socio-economic development as echoed by Magoma (2014) who in his study found out that the Catholic Church has had a lot of impact in education in Gusii land especially in the establishment and development of secondary education which in turn contributed greatly to socio-economic development of the people. From the reviews it is very clear that sponsorship and donations have a positive impact on retention of students in secondary schools especially in Marsabit County. However, Mabeya, Ndiku & Njino (2010) disagrees with the views that sponsors play a big role in supporting learning institutions and instead holds the sponsor do meddle a lot with the school management leaving the head teacher with no option other than seeking favors.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The study used convergent mixed method design. In this design the researcher merged both quantitative and qualitative data so as to have a comprehensive analysis of the research problem According to Creswell & Creswell (2018) in mixed method design, the researcher collects both qualitative and quantitative data and analyses them separately and then compares the results to see whether the findings confirm or disconfirm with each other. Convergent parallel mixed

method research design was preferred for this study because it provides me the researcher an opportunity to collect both quantitative and qualitative data at the same phase weighing the methods equally and analyzing the two components independently while interpreting the results together (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011). The study was conducted in ten Catholic sponsored secondary schools in Marsabit County where the Catholic Church offers a leadership training program for secondary school students. Marsabit County is one of the largest counties in Kenya which covers 70,961km<sup>2</sup> and it is divided into four sub-counties namely: Saku, Laisamis, North Horr and Moyale sub-county. Marsabit County is inhabited by several pastoralist communities who value livestock more than education. The county has a total of 320 secondary schools (Amani Club, 2018).

To ease the data collection process, the researcher divided the population in to four strata comprising of boarding boy schools, boarding girl schools, mixed day schools and mixed boarding schools. From the strata one school was selected from the four sub-counties in Marsabit County. To sample the teacher, simple random sampling method was employed. To ensure fairness and avoid bias, the sampling process was done through picking a 'Yes' or 'No' labeled piece of papers. The study assumed an optimum sample size of 20% of the total population to obtain a sample size of 400 respondents. Questionnaires and interview guide were used in data collection process. Both the quantitative and qualitative data collected was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) whereby descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages were generated. The presentation of the analyzed data was done in form of tables, bar charts and pie charts. The data from interviews was arranged and analyzed in a thematic manner.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **Demographic Characteristics**

The study found out that the respondents who were below 14 years were 45 (11%), those between 15 years and 18 years were 232 (58%), those between 19 years and 24 years were 94 (24%), those between 25 years and 31 years were 14 (4%), those between 32 years and 36 years were 8 (2%), while those 37 years and above were 7(2%). From the data collected the student constituted the highest number of respondents (91%). It was noted that the number of girls who responded to the questionnaires was higher than that of boys; girls 56% and boys 44%. The high number of girls who participated seem to suggest that nowadays girls are given chance to attend schools as compared to yester years whereby girls were given off to marriages as established by Muyaka, 2018. The findings also seem to be backed by Hunqe (2001) and Halakhe (2019) whereby drug abuse and Miraa business has affected many school going boys.

### **Descriptive Statistics**

**Table 1: Catholic Diocese of Marsabit Initiated Programs**

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Schools should invite the Catholic Church to offer educational programs which can help to enhance the retention of students in secondary schools.	0(0%)	3(1%)	30 (8%)	367(91%)
Leadership training program facilitated by the Catholic diocese of Marsabit has helped students to remain in school throughout	7(2%)	25(6%)	100(25%)	268 (67%)
I have you benefited from the motivational talks and counselling programs offered by the Catholic Diocese of Marsabit	3(0.75%)	10(3%)	200(50%)	187(47%)
Through the programs offered by the Catholic Diocese of Marsabit, I am Motivated and I recommend the programs to Continue	5(1%)	12(3%)	162(41%)	221(55%)
I don't like to miss any of the programs facilitated by the Catholic diocese of Marsabit;				
I am always attentive to the sessions	0(0%)	8(2%)	305(76%)	87(22%)
I would prefer to study in Catholic owned schools rather than public schools	40 (10%)	77(19%)	257(64%)	26(7%)

**Source: Researcher (2021)**

The finding agreed with the statement that the statement that schools should invite the Catholic Church to offer educational programs which can help in the enhancement of retention of students in secondary schools because out of the 400 participants who responded to the questionnaire 91% strongly agreed with 8% of the respondents merely agreeing with the statement while 1% disagreed and 0% strongly disagreeing. The finding revealed that only 2% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement that leadership training program offered by the Catholic diocese of Marsabit has helped students to remain in school throughout while 6% disagreed. On the contrary, 25% of the respondents agreed and 67% strongly agreed with the statement. The response concurs with the findings of Nduyo (2013) who established that Church organized programs have a positive impact on retention of students in school.

Responding to whether they had benefited from the educational programs offered by the Catholic diocese of Marsabit, 47% strongly agreed and 50% agreed while 3% disagreed and less than 1% strongly disagreed. Further, the findings showed that 76% of the respondents agreed that they did not like to miss the programs offered by the Catholic diocese of Marsabit in their schools with 22% agreeing with the statement while 2% disagreed. This finding seems to be in agreement with Douglas & Raymond (1986) who held that, church activities and programs positively affect school attendance and the ability of the students to manage their time well. The respondents gave different reasons why they preferred not to miss the program. The teachers said that contents of the programs especially the leadership training program they could only get then at a

cost from other institutions. On their part, some of the students said that programs gave them a break from classroom setting while others said the sessions were lively and interesting and that why they wished not to miss. The response is in agreement with Byrne (2014) when he holds that motivational programs helps an individual student to reflect and attain holistic development and thus the students are able to make independent decision to value their studies after having attended the programs. Whether one preferred to study in Catholic owned schools rather than public schools, 7% strongly agreed with 64% agreeing while 19% and 10% disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. The response of the participants confirms the finding of Barasa & Misati (2012) that the Catholic diocese of Marsabit has contributed immensely to the development of education in the larger Marsabit County.

**Table 2: Catholic Diocese of Marsabit Sponsorship and Donations**

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The Catholic diocese of Marsabit has done a lot in donation of school equipment and construction of school buildings	0(0%)	35(9%)	300(75%)	65(16%)
Feeding program facilitated by the Catholic diocese of Marsabit has helped many students to complete their studies	5(1%)	10(3%)	90 (23%)	295 (74%)
If it were not for the Catholic diocese of Marsabit, many children will not be in school and the illiteracy rate in the county will be very high	0(0%)	2(1%)	80(20%)	318(80%)
Through Catholic Church’s donations and sponsorship programs many students are able to remain in school and attain education	12(3%)	17(4%)	210 (53%)	161(40%)
I have been a beneficiary of the donations and Sponsorship from the Catholic diocese of Marsabit	46(12%)	72(18%)	200(50%)	82(21%)

**Source: Researcher (2021)**

Responding to the statement that Catholic diocese of Marsabit has done a lot in donating school equipment and construction of school buildings, the findings revealed that 16% strongly agreed and 75% agreed with statement while 9% disagreed. The response seems to confirm the findings of Njeru (2013) that the Marsabit County has been lagging behind when it comes to education matters and that is why the Catholic Diocese of Marsabit is literally doing everything to support education in the county. The statement on the feeding program facilitated by the Catholic diocese of Marsabit having helped many students to complete school attracted a positive response with 74% of the respondents strongly agreeing and 23% agreeing while 4% disagreed. The table showed that 53% and 40% of the respondent agreed and strongly agreed with the statement that through Catholic donations and sponsorship programs many students are able to remain in school and attain education while 4% disagreed and 3% strongly disagreed. The finding clearly showed that 71% of the respondents had personally benefited from the financial

and material assistance offered by the Catholic diocese of Marsabit. Roughly 30% of the respondents seemed to have not benefited. The response confirms the findings of Muoki (2017) who established that through sponsorship and donation from the Catholic, many children have benefited immensely and have been able to be retained in school to complete their studies since the church has mechanism to ensure the accomplishment of the goals.

Asked why they thought if it were not for the Catholic diocese of Marsabit, many children would not be in school and the illiteracy rate in the Marsabit County would be high, the principals said that the Catholic Church had been the sole provider of education before for Marsabit County was created given that the region was neglected by the government and that pastoralist communities gave no importance to education. The response seems to confirm the stand of Kenya Catholic Education Policy of 2000 and echoes the findings of Magoma (2014) which revealed that the Church has had a lot of impact in education and social economic development of the Gusii people. Through the interviews some the students said they had benefited from the sponsorship by the Catholic Church right from primary school. Responses from the interview guide, many of the school principals and teachers when asked why they thought the Catholic Church should be invited to offer educational programs said that those programs complemented the school activities and helped students to keep focused in their studies, kept them occupied and helped to make the characters of students who seemed to be difficult. The response from the school principals is in support of findings of Yisrashe (2000) who established that the Catholic diocese of Marsabit has continued to support the establishment and construction boarding schools to easy retention and enhance smooth running of the schools.

## **5.0 Conclusions of the Study**

The study concluded that the Catholic diocese of Marsabit has done a lot in the education sector and has had a positive impact on the enhancement of student retention in Marsabit County. The response from the participants indicated that through educational programs, sponsorship and donations, the Catholic diocese of Marsabit assisted in every aspects of education in the county be it financial, material, spiritual or moral support. The findings concurred with the principles of Tinto's theory on effective retention and effective implementation that through the support from the Catholic diocese of Marsabit, students are able to be retained in school to achieve their goals. Further, the findings show that through the involvement of the Catholic diocese of Marsabit, the factors that influence school dropout as mentioned by Tinto in his theory of student retention are addressed. Moreover, the findings of this study confirms the principle Maslow's theory of hierarchy of needs, whereby the satisfaction of the lower needs leads to desire of the higher need. For instance, when the students' basic need such as food and shelter are catered for through donations and sponsorships, the students are motivated to work hard and are able to proceed to the next level.

## **6.0 Recommendations**

Since it was clear from the study that without the involvement of the Catholic diocese of Marsabit in the education sector in Marsabit County, the county would be very behind when it comes to education, the study recommends that school administrations to establish a good working relationship with the Catholic Church and take advantage of the services offered by the Catholic Church which can support education and enhance student retention in school. The study also recommends that school administrations in Marsabit County to engage other institutions and NGOs in order to facilitate retention of students in the County. The study further, suggests that

the Ministry of Education to come up with motivational programs that can enhance students' retention in secondary schools. In addition, the study recommends that, the MPs to ensure more allocation of Constituency Development Fund and Bursaries to the needy students. Finally, the study recommends more study to be carried out to establish other factors which may enhance retention of students in secondary schools in Marsabit County.

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