

# Modeling Strategies Adopted by Teachers to Promote School Attendance amongst Primary School Adolescent Girls in Baringo County

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## Abstract

The study sought to establish modeling strategies employed by teachers to enhance school attendance in primary schools in Baringo County. The study was guided by Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory. The study targeted head teachers, class teachers and standard seven girls in public primary schools in the county. Proportionate random sampling was used to select participating schools from each sub-county which made 66 primary schools. All the head-teachers and class teachers from the selected schools participated in this study. Data was collected using questionnaire and document analysis. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques Data was presented using frequency tables. The modeling strategies included teachers appreciating all pupils despite individual and cultural differences, providing constructive feedback, offering support, having more secure relationship with them, not giving up on them and encouraging them to think positively. It is hoped that the findings will be used by parents, teachers and policy stakeholders to strategize on how to improve attendance of girls in primary schools.

**Key words:** modeling; strategies; attendance; adolescent girls.

## 1. Introduction

Since the World Declaration of Education for All, many developing countries, Kenya included have been making strides to realize the universalization of primary education as well as to minimize illiteracy rates among their populations.

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Particularly, greater efforts have been made by governments worldwide to improve the education of women [1]. However, the greatest challenge facing Kenya is that of ensuring access by eliminating all existing disparities [2], with particular reference to the education of girls, women and children in disadvantaged regions like arid and semi-arid lands. Globally, 600 million adolescent girls struggle with widespread poverty, limited access to education and health services, and persistent discrimination and violence. Adolescent girls are among the most economically vulnerable groups, significantly more so than adult women or adolescent boys [3]. The major challenge facing Kenya is how to reduce gender inequality and enhance women participation in economic activities [4]. Students who are routinely absent are also more likely to drop out of high school prior to earning their high school diploma. Several factors appear to influence student attendance in schools across the state [5]. The development of positive relationships between the teacher and students and between the students themselves will contribute to educational success [6]. Researchers [7] opine that student's adjustment to school may be affected by the teacher's supportive behaviors. Teachers need to provide an atmosphere for the students which encourage success for their efforts and achievements [8].

### ***1.1 Statement of the Problem***

In all areas of society, need for gender equality has become the norm. Universally accepted principles of human rights have set the standard for equality between women and men. This concept extends to the recognition that girls and young women are unique individuals with rights and responsibilities similar to those of boys and young men. It is important to examine the specific circumstances that have distinguished the lives of girls and young women from those of boys and young men. Statistics from Baringo County Education office show that there are 656 primary schools with 140,011 pupils out of which 67,671 are girls and 72,340 are boys. Further, in the urban primary schools, the dropout rate for boys was 29.93% while for girls was 32.01%. This means that the enrolment of boys is higher than that of girls. This study therefore sought to establish the modeling strategies employed by teachers to encourage school attendance by adolescent girls.

### ***1.1. Literature Review***

Modeling is a process of learning or acquiring new information, skills or behavior through observation. The relationship a student has with the teacher is one of the best predictors of students' effort and engagement in learning [9]. The teacher's enthusiasm, interest, positive emotion and encouragement promote different attitudes towards students' achievement and willingness to participate [10]. Students need to view a teacher as someone who is genuinely concerned, invests time in them, and is interested in what is occurring in their lives; not a person who only gives assignments and tests [11]. Teachers who are respected, trusted, and cared for personally are inclined to support their students in the same manner [9]. Teachers can be a positive role model to the students by not only teaching academics, but taking the time to be a confidant [12]. Students who have a secure relationship with their teacher tend to take more risks, display increased motivation to attempt challenging tasks, and are willing to ask for assistance when needed [9]. To engage and support a shy student, a teacher needs to initiate interaction, even through simple conversations. Patience, listening attentively, being sensitive to the interests and feelings of the student, and providing encouragement is also important [13, 14]. Teachers need to consistently demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of individual and cultural differences within the

classroom [15]. The teacher's role in the classroom will impact students' behaviors. The development of positive relationships between the teacher and students and between the students themselves will contribute to educational success [6]. A student's adjustment to school may be affected by the teacher's supportive behaviors [7]. A teacher should respond to misbehavior gently and with greater explanation than punishment. Students appreciate a teacher who provides constructive feedback, offers support, holds them accountable, and refuses to give up on them. It is advantageous for a teacher to take the time to communicate with the students about their learning and comprehension about what has been presented. Allowing students the opportunity to be involved in classroom decisions creates an atmosphere of care and trust. Taking the time to learn about students' interests and having conversations about their personal lives, can aid in their academic and social successes [9]. These interactions can increase a student's sense of self-worth and self-awareness [7]. The teacher should take the time to make each child feel unique and valuable [11]. Children know teachers care about them when they are greeted as they enter the classroom, their emotional needs are addressed, and they are treated fairly [9]. A priority of the teacher should be to attend to the social and emotional needs of the students [6]. Teachers should provide direct instruction to children pertaining to social skills and the appropriate language to be utilized when interacting with other students [16]. Teacher feedback needs to be such that students can develop strategies from the teacher's comments. This helpful feedback may increase academic and social success [8]. When a teacher indicates the desired behavior or action, it aids the child in self-assessing how to proceed [17]. Observing children in a variety of environments, such as field trips, center time, group projects, recess, or specials can provide further information about a child. Anecdotal notes are a method for organizing the information [18]. Collecting this information provides another opportunity for feedback, and teacher insight. The feedback will be used to make adjustments on how to relate with the learners and show them what is expected of them. Through observation, the learners can be able to appreciate the need for attending and participating in school activities. Therefore a teacher becomes a role model to the learners. Communicating with parents any observations about their child can provide consistency [16]. Ideally, parents and teachers should communicate when to praise, ignore, or focus attention on particular behaviors [15]. Frequently, children will respond favorably to positive peer influence and teacher reinforcement. The teacher may reduce the use of individual rewards, and reward the preferred behaviors through group reinforcement [19]. Some children respond to a desired reward to change the original behavior, and others change behavior due to the strengthened personal connection with the teacher, parent, or peer [7]. Teachers should be committed and understand the significance of strong communication skills and how it relates to overall student success [20]. It is the teacher's responsibility to recognize different interaction styles and to adapt the communication environment accordingly [18]. A teacher's method of calling upon students: volunteer vs. non-volunteer, the frequency in which a specific student is called upon, and prompting for understanding can influence students' participation and achievement [10]. Standing in proximity or calling upon a student more frequently can increase engagement [21]. Proper communication strategies adopted by the teachers help the learners to express themselves and therefore able to share their insights with the teachers. This is likely to enhance the relationship between the teacher and the students. This is an important aspect towards attendance by the learners which was the concern of this study.

## **1.2 Methodology**

The study was carried out in Baringo County, Kenya. It adopted a descriptive survey research design that

utilized both qualitative and quantitative methods were used. The accessible population consisted of head teachers, teachers and standard seven girls in public primary schools in the county. The schools were stratified according to the sub-counties then a proportion of 10 percent of schools were randomly selected from each strata to represent the sample. From each school, 30% of standard seven girls were selected as respondents through random sampling method. Each head teacher of the schools sampled and a class teacher of class seven from sampled schools were included in the study sample. This meant that there were 66 Head teachers, 66 class teachers and 259 class seven girls making a total of 391 respondents for this study. The researcher used questionnaire and document analysis as the main tools for collecting data.

## 2. Findings

The study sought to establish the teacher modeling strategies that promote school attendance of pupils in primary schools in Baringo County. The pupils' responses are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Pupils' Responses on Teacher Modeling Strategies

Statement	SA		A		N		D		SD		TOTAL	
	f	%	F	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	F	%
<b>I am motivated to attend school when:</b>												
Teachers are enthusiastic, interesting, with positive emotions and encouraging	186	71.8	57	22.0	12	4.6	3	1.2	1	.4	259	100.0
Teachers keep my secrets	169	65.3	63	24.3	19	7.3	6	2.3	2	.8	259	100.0
Teachers are friendly with me	158	61.0	73	28.2	23	8.9	3	1.2	2	.8	259	100.0
Teachers are patient and attentive listeners	160	61.8	77	29.7	15	5.8	4	1.5	3	1.2	259	100.0
Teachers demonstrate an understanding of individual differences	161	62.2	71	27.4	20	7.7	6	2.3	1	.4	259	100.0
Teachers help me to minimize my stress and embarrassment	181	69.9	54	20.8	18	6.9	4	1.5	2	.8	259	100.0
Teachers create a particular area where we may go with a teacher to share feeling and thoughts	163	62.9	62	23.9	23	8.9	5	1.9	6	2.3	259	100.0
Teachers teach respect, kindness and empathy	199	76.8	48	18.5	10	3.9	0	0	2	.8	259	100.0
Teachers give me opportunities to share and listen in class	167	64.5	70	27.0	19	7.3	1	.4	2	.8	259	100.0
Teachers encourage successful pupil interaction by pairing shy pupils that are well liked	168	64.9	69	26.6	13	5.0	7	2.7	2	.8	259	100.0

The pupils who were involved in this study stated that teachers who are enthusiastic, interesting with positive emotions and encouraging (93.8 %) increases school attendance of the pupils. School attendance is also increased when teachers keep their pupils' secrets (89.6%), teachers who are friendly with them (89.6 %), teachers who are patient and attentive listeners (91.5%) and teachers who demonstrate an understanding of

individual differences within the classroom increases school attendance (89.6 %). It was also established that teachers who help pupils to minimize stress and embarrassment (90.7%), when pupils share feelings and thoughts with the teachers (86.9%), teachers who teach respect kindness and empathy (95.4 %), when teachers give the pupils opportunities to share in class (91.5%) and when teachers encourage successful pupils' interaction by pairing shy pupils with pupils that are well liked increase school attendance of the pupils. The relationship a student has with the teacher is one of the best predictors of students' effort and engagement in learning [9]. The teacher's enthusiasm, interest, positive emotion and encouragement promote different attitudes towards students' achievement and willingness to participate [10]. Students need to view a teacher as someone who is genuinely concerned, invests time in them, and is interested in what is occurring in their lives; not a person who only gives assignments and tests [7, 11]. Teachers who are respected, trusted, and cared for personally are inclined to support their students in the same manner [9]. This is expected to enhance girls' school attendance.

Teachers' responses concerning the modeling strategies they adopt to promote pupils school attendance is presented in Table 2.

**Table 2:** Teachers' Responses on Modeling Strategies Employed By Teachers

Statement	SA		A		N		D		SD		TOTAL	
	f	%	F	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	F	%
<b>Pupils are encouraged to attend school when:</b>												
Teachers are enthusiastic and encouraging	39	59.1	24	36.4	2	3.0	1	1.5	0	0	66	100.0
Teachers are confidants of students	34	51.5	24	36.4	6	9.1	1	1.5	1	1.5	66	100.0
Teachers have secure relationship with their pupils	35	53.0	21	31.8	9	13.6	1	1.5	0	0	66	100.0
Teachers are patient and attentive listeners	48	72.7	13	19.7	4	6.1	1	1.5	0	0	66	100.0
Teachers demonstrate an understanding of cultural differences	25	37.9	21	31.8	18	27.3	2	3.0	0	0	66	100.0
Teachers support pupils to minimize stress	41	62.1	24	36.4	0	0	1	1.5	0	0	66	100.0
Teachers create a comfort corner	32	48.5	28	42.4	4	6.1	2	3.0	0	0	66	100.0
Teachers teach compromise, respect, kindness and empathy	36	54.5	25	37.9	3	4.5	2	3.0	0	0	66	100.0
Teachers give pupils opportunities to share and listen	31	47.0	30	45.5	4	6.1	1	1.5	0	0	66	100.0
Teachers encourage successful students interaction by pairing shy students with students that are well liked	30	45.5	24	36.4	12	18.2	0	0	0	0	66	100.0

The teachers were of similar views concerning the teacher modeling strategies that promote school attendance of pupils in primary schools in Baringo County. As shown in the findings presented in chapter four, majority (95.5%) of the teachers were of the opinion that teachers who are enthusiastic and encouraging increases school attendance while 87.9 % stated that teachers who are confident of students increases school attendance. The findings also show that 84.8 % of the teachers stated that teachers who have secure relationship with their

pupils' increases school attendance. Teachers who are patient and attentive listeners and have feelings of students (92.4%), demonstrate an understanding of cultural differences within the classroom (69.7%), help to minimize a child stress(98.5%) and create comfort corners where pupils share feelings, thoughts and ideals with the teachers(90.9%) increase pupils school attendance. It was also established that teachers who teach compromise, respect, kindness and empathy (92.4%) and when they give pupils opportunities to share and listen and encourage successful students' interaction increases school attendance. Further analysis revealed that there existed a significant relationship between teachers' modeling strategies and girls' school attendance in primary schools in Baringo County ( $\chi^2 = 161.571$ ,  $df=72$  and  $sig = 0.000$ ).

### **3. Conclusions**

As for the modeling strategies adopted by teachers, it can be concluded that teachers who are enthusiastic, friendly, patient, attentive listeners, interesting with positive emotions and encouraging encourages the adolescent girls to continue attending school. It should also be noted that when teachers keep their pupils' secrets, demonstrate an understanding of individual differences within the classroom and help pupils to minimize stress and embarrassment motivates learners to attend school. The pupils' school attendance is also increased when teachers allow pupils to share feelings and thoughts with the teachers and their colleagues through successful pupils' interaction by pairing shy pupils with pupils that are well liked.

### **4. Recommendations of the study**

The study recommends that teachers should be able to determine the individual needs of the learners and be concerned with the pupils' academic progress. This will encourage the learners to continue attending school. Forums should be created to enhance student-teacher interaction so that the pupil's self-esteem and cooperation among the learners can be enhanced.

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