⮺ OPEN ACCESS

Student Characteristics Leading to Students' Dropout from Mixed-Day Secondary Schools in Bomet East Sub-County, Kenya

Chebet Winny[1], Ishenyi Polycarp Muchesia[2*]

[1]PhD Student, Bomet University College, Kenya
[2]Lecturer, Bomet University College, Kenya

*Corresponding author: Ishenyi Polycarp Muchesia
Lecturer, Bomet University College, Kenya

Abstract	Original Research Article

Kenya's education sector has faced many bottlenecks one being school dropouts. In 2018, the Kenyan government came up with 100% transition rate from primary school to secondary school to increase access to secondary school education which was hoped to result in increased completion rates. This study aimed at investigating Student's Characteristics Leading to Students' Dropout from Mixed-Day Secondary Schools in Bomet East Sub-County, Kenya for the period between the year 2019 and 2022. This study investigated individual student's reasons as to why students drop out of school and suggested recommendations on what can be done about it. This study was guided by the objective: to investigate the student's-related factors leading to school dropout. The researcher based the study on The Classical Theory of Equal Opportunities and Social Darwinism which reiterates that each person is born with some ability that cannot be altered but can be nurtured and is unique to that particular individual. To collect data from Principals, teachers and students of the sampled Mixed Day Secondary schools, the researcher employed Descriptive Survey. Before embarking on actual research, Piloting was carried out. Questionnaires and interview schedules were used to collect data while Percentages and Frequencies were used to analyze the data. Analysis was done by Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The study revealed that the following student's characteristics lead to students' dropout; financial problems, peer influence, pregnancy, drug abuse, operating motorcycle business, over age, community/ family, family child labour, negative attitude to schooling, migration and health issues. The study suggests six recommendations to curb school dropouts. The researcher hopes that the findings will benefit the teachers, school principals and other school managers and the Ministry of Education to put necessary measures in place to deal with the dropout problem. The findings will add value to the existing knowledge.
Keywords: Student's Characteristics, Students' Dropout, Mixed-Day, Secondary Schools.

INTRODUCTION

Drop out from schooling is a major drawback to a country's education progress. It hinders individual as well as a nation's attainment of education goals. It is a global problem that has particular determinants that can be fought as a remedy. Teenage pregnancy rates are particularly high in Central America, and teen mothers may find it impossible to continue in school due to lack of needed supports such as daycare, while other young women may decide that it is preferable to leave school and start a family early [1]. Similarly, crime and violence are major problems in several Central American countries, with homicide rates for Honduras ranking the highest in the world and those for Guatemala and El Salvador ranking in the top five [2]. Violence in and around a school may make it untenable for youth to continue attending, while illicit activity may offer some youth an attractive alternative to staying in school [3].

A study by [4] revealed that besides structural factors such as larger schools and class sizes, School policies influencing grade retention, suspension, and expulsion are reliable predictors of dropout on top of the climate of the school, which include low levels of teacher support and expectations for student success. On an African view [5], describes Nigeria (Africa's largest economy) as the country with the most dropouts/out-of-school children in Africa, with 16.9%. To no surprise - people continue to troop out of its educational systems for various reasons, such as the Boko Haram crisis, kidnapping, and the constant industrial actions [5].

In Kenya, a study by [6] on the role of student characteristics in drop out cases among secondary school students in Vihiga County revealed that most students dropped out as a result of failure to raise school fees (41. 3%), pregnancy (39. 4%), peer pressure (49. 1%) and lack of support from home (34.1%). The study further revealed that distance from school contributed least to dropout (3.1%) since most day schools (69. 4%) were established within reasonable distance from the students' catchment.

The purpose of the study was to investigate the student's characteristics leading to students" dropout from mixed-day secondary schools in Bomet East Subcounty, Kenya. The specific objective of the study was therefore to investigate the student's characteristics leading to students' dropout from Mixed-Day secondary schools in Bomet East Sub- County, Kenya. The study sought to answer the question: What individual student factors can make students drop out from mixed-day secondary schools in Bomet East Sub-County? Answers to this question are hoped to inform the school managers and the ministry of education to put remedial measures in place to curb school dropout

The researcher based the study on Classical Theory of Equal Opportunities and Social Darwinism. The theory asserts that human groups and races are subject to the same laws of natural selection as Charles Darwin perceived   in plants and animals in   nature. Therefore, educational systems should be designed so as to remove barriers of any nature (economic, gender, geographic, ethnic) that prevent bright students from lower economic backgrounds from taking advantage of inborn abilities, which accelerate them to social promotion [7]. The theory demands that learners go through education at primary and secondary level to which access would be determined on the basis of individual's merit and not social backgrounds.

A study by [8] on whether student characteristics can lead to school dropout revealed that low share of the family members and insufficient emotional ties increases the dropout risk of individual learner as this will reduce parental involvement. Similarly, a study by [9] on causes of female dropout in a secondary school in Dadaab Refugee Camp found out that positive family relationships impact the study of the learners, increasing motivation and performance, retention and completion. The study further revealed that family relationships may also contribute toward absenteeism, poor concentration, demotivation and finally dropout [9].

Furthermore, a study by [10] revealed that Peer influence (11.3%), Death of parent (10%), Academic failure (10%), Teacher's or other students' behaviours (10%), Economic reasons (9.3%), Health reasons (8.6%), unwanted pregnancy, rape, or early marriage

(8%), and males, being involved in sport and music (17.6%) were the students' causes of dropout. In a related manner, a study by [10, 11] revealed that Poverty, distance, the parent's Illness, Student's bad influence, Influence of large family, Academic achievements and Learning difficulties as major causes of individual learner's dropout. Similarly, a study by [12] in Egypt found out that girls' dropout was majorly determined by general health of the girl, the weakness of self-confidence, the sense of deprivation and oppression. Nonetheless, a study by [13] found out that early marriages and teenage pregnancies among girls, latent costs, retrogressive cultural practices, lack of sufficient teachers and HIV and AIDS were the main causes of dropouts of learners from day secondary schools in the subcounty.

No study Within Bomet East Sub County in Kenya, has investigated and documented financial problems, peer influence, pregnancy, drug abuse, operating   motor   cycle   business,   overage, community/family, family child labour, negative attitudes towards schooling, migration and health issues as possible causes of secondary school dropout. This study was conducted based on this gap.

METHODOLOGY
This study employed descriptive research design. This design helps researchers answer descriptive questions, questions about the relationships between variables and questions about predictive relationships between variables over time [14, 15], further states that descriptive survey is a method of collecting information by interviewing or administering a questionnaire to a sample of individuals [16] on the other hand postulates that it can be used when collecting   information   about   people's   attitudes, opinions, habits or any of the variety of education or social science issues. The researcher thus considered this design for this study because it offers an opportunity to obtain information from mixed-day secondary school's principals, teachers and students on the school-related factors leading to school dropouts in Bomet East Sub-County, Kenya.

Purposive sampling was used in the study. Purposive sampling refers to a group of non-probability sampling techniques in which units are selected because they have characteristics that you need in your sample [17]. It was used to select the Bomet East sub-county as the study site since it is the largest of the five sub counties in Bomet County and has high dropout rates in the county. Through stratification, mixed day secondary schools were selected from other types of schools because this category of schools largely benefited from the government's introduction of 100 per cent transition rate policy in 2018 to complement Free Day Secondary Education (FDSE) which was introduced in 2008. The target population was all the principals, teachers and

students from 25 public mixed day secondary schools in Bomet East Sub County since they directly interacted with those who dropped out and may have some knowledge on why they did so. These schools have a combined population of 25 Principals, 375 teachers comprising 251 males and 124 females and 4896 students comprising 2574 boys and 2322 girls. The preliminary stage of the study was the development of sampling frame of head teachers, teachers, and students from sampled schools. The appropriate sample sizes for this study were determined based on [18] table of determining sample sizes.

Sampling was conducted randomly. Random sampling is an unbiased method where each population element has the fixed probabilistic chance of inclusion in the sample [19]. Twenty-two (22) out of 25 mixed day secondary schools were sampled for the study based on [18] table. The population of principals, teachers and students in the sampled schools was used to determine sample sizes for the study. The population for principals, teachers and students in the sampled schools were 22, 375 and 4896 respectively. Based on [18] table of determining sample sizes, the number of sampled principals, teachers and students for the study was 22, 181 and 357 respectively. The derived number of teachers and students were then selected through simple random sampling that allots equal probability of selection to each unit of the population [19].

Table-1: Table of Determining Sample Sizes.

Item	Principals	Teachers	Students Total
Male	21	251	2574 2846
Female	4	124	2322 2450
Total	25	375	4896 5296
Sample	22	181	357 560

Source: Researcher, 2023

Data was collected through use of questionnaires and interview schedules. Questionnaires are used to collect both qualitative and quantitative data about their attitudes, experiences, or opinions from respondents [20]. Interview schedules were used to collect data specifically from the principals due to their busy administrative duties.

The researcher firstly sought authorization letter from graduate school which aided in the acquisition of a research permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation. Secondly, the researcher obtained clearance to collect data in Bomet Sub County from the Sub-County Education Officer. Thirdly, the researcher visited the sampled schools to collect data during which completed the questionnaires were collected on the spot. This was done in order to avoid contamination of data [21]. Fourthly, the quantitative and qualitative data were arranged and grouped based on particular research questions. Qualitative data was then coded to make data

reduction possible and manageable for thematic analysis, interpretation and reporting of the findings. Quantitative data on the other hand were entered into a computer programme and the analysis was done using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Quantitative data were tabulated, analysed and presented in frequencies, percentages and means.

RESULTS

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize and describe data. Descriptive statistics enable researchers to present data in a more meaningful way which allows simpler interpretations of the data in the form of frequencies and percentages presented in the form of a figure [19, 22] further states that academic writing in many subject areas requires the use of tables and figures to present data which should be integrated appropriately. He further states that figures are advised when it is necessary to depict patterns, trends, and relations between data as opposed to tables since they are used to highlight the pattern rather than the data itself besides being used to visually describe a series of events, procedures, qualities or attributes or to summarize research results. Figure 1 presents data on the student's characteristics leading to student's dropout from mixed day secondary schools in Bomet East Sub-County. This data was obtained from the sampled principals, teachers and students in the sampled schools.

Figure 1 presents the Characteristics of students who drop out from mixed day secondary schools in Bomet East Sub-County. The characteristics which were mentioned are as follows; financial problems which was identified by 554 (99.10%) respondents; peer influence which was identified by 532 (95%) of the total respondents ;students who get pregnant when in school which was stated by 494 (88.29%) of the total respondents ; drug abuse which was identified by 449 (80.18%) of the total respondents; operating motorbikes business which was stated by 437 (78.21%) of the teachers; over age students which was mentioned by 427 (76.38%);community/ family factors which was stated by 423 (75.68%); family child labour which was stated by 338 (60.36%) of the total respondents; negative attitude to schooling which was identified by 282(50.45%) of the teachers; migration to other locations which was mentioned by 227 (40.54%) of the teachers and health issues which was identified by 227 (40.54%) of the respondents. It is evident that the majority of the respondents cited financial problems and peer influence as the key factors that contribute to students drop out from mixed day secondary schools in Bomet East Sub-County and the minority cited migration to other locations and health issues as influencing factors. The inability of many parents to raise school fees, lack of money for uniforms, books, pens and other costs associated with school also greatly impacts on school dropout.
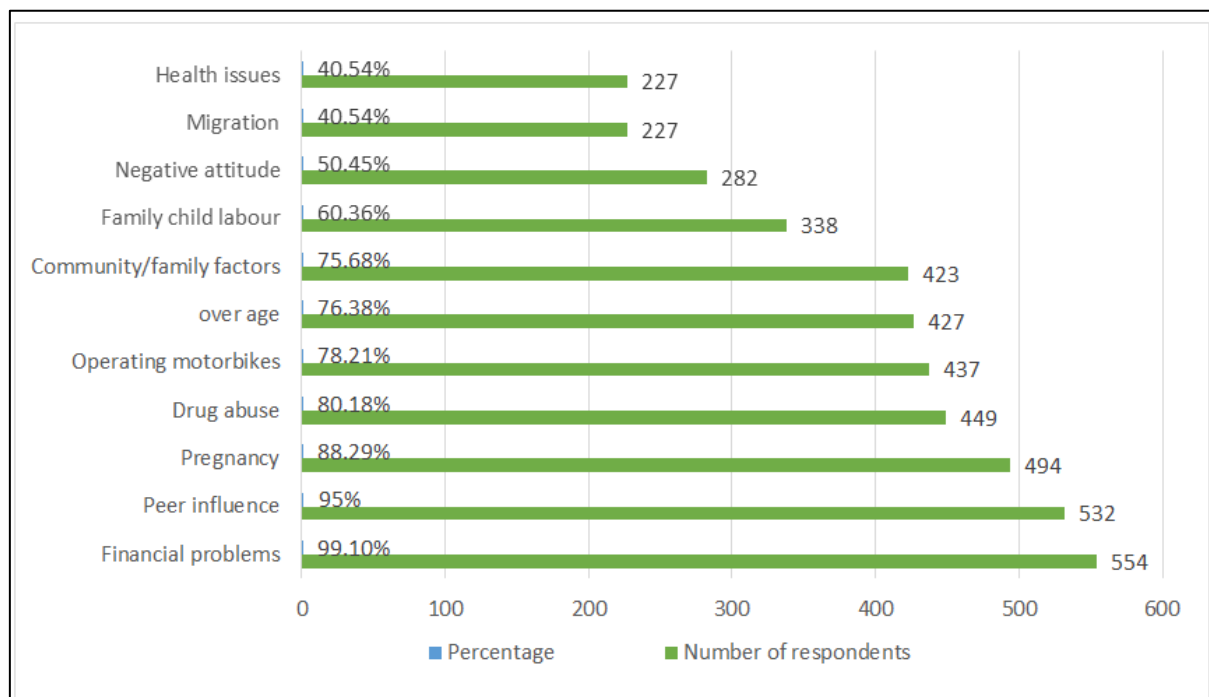
Figure 1: Student's characteristics leading to school dropout

DISCUSSION

The following student's characteristics were identified as determinants of dropout listed from the strongest determinant downwards; financial problems, peer influence, pregnancy, drug abuse, operating motorbikes, over age, community/family factors, family child labour, negative attitude towards school, migration and health issues. 99.10% respondents stated financial problems as the major determinant of students' dropout. This finding agrees with some other researchers' findings. According to a study by the National Center of Education Statistics, students with low family incomes have the highest dropout rates at 9.4% [23]. *In this study, drug abuse was rated third. It concurs with other researches that indeed drug abuse leads to drop out.* [4], *in his study found out that most drop outs smoked tobacco and marijuana among other illicit drugs. Teenage pregnancy was another factor that contributed to school dropout.* Teen pregnancy and parenthood are considered outside factors for school disengagement among secondary school students in Latin America, according to CAF study [24]. *The study further states that* teen pregnancy compromises young girls' development opportunities, as dropping out of school hinders their formal education, resulting in employment and productive disadvantages, while making them vulnerable to poverty, violence, crime and social exclusion [24]. *Community/family factors were found to contribute to school dropout too.* Sometimes the responsibility taking care of younger siblings or even their parents can fall on the shoulders of a teen — shoulders that previously held a book bag if a health complication or other life event makes the adult of a family unable to head the household [25]. Needing to

leave school for work is just one aspect contributing to the dropout rate [26]. Traditions expect girls to undertake certain roles at an early age, such as cooking, fetching water and generally performing all domestic chores [27].

CONCLUSION

It was concluded that indeed there were individual student's characteristics that forced students to drop out of mixed day secondary schools in Bomet East Sub-County that need to be addressed for attainment of 100 per cent completion Rates. The identified student's characteristics were in the following order: 1. Financial problems, 2. Peer influence, 3. Pregnancy, 4. Drug abuse, 5. Operating motorbikes, 6. Over age, 7. Community/family factors, 8. Family child labour, 9. Negative attitude towards school 10. Migration, and 11. Health issues

Based on these findings, the following six recommendations have been suggested:

a. School principals should solicit funds from well-wishers and even school management to assist the needy students in their schools.

b. Mentorship programme should be strengthened in schools to empower individual students as a way of dealing with peer pressure.

c. Girls should be sensitized of the losses associated with early pregnancies.

d. Boys should be discouraged from early economic activities such as riding motorbikes as it denies them educational benefits.

e. Parents should be discouraged from denying their children education in the name of helping

them in their economic activities.

f. School management should provide students with a receptive and conducive school environment that students can always yearn to be in.

REFERENCES

1. UNICEF. (2022). *Early chilbearing and teenage pregnancy rates by country.* UNICEF DATA.
2. World Bank, (2021). *Crime and violence in Central America: A development challenge-Main Report.* worldbank.org.
3. UNICEF. (2021). *Protecting children from violence in school.* UNICEF.
4. Mahooney, J. (2018). School dropout. In *The sage encyclopedia of lifespan human development* (pp. 1889-1891). Thousand oaks,CA:sage.
5. Mustard Insights. (2023). *Dropout rate in Africa worsens Nigeria, Ethiopia lead the pack.*https://blog.mustardinsights.com/t/Nigeria-d65wu
6. Shavisa, T., Ndiku, J. M., & Musasia, M. A. (2016). The Role of Student Characteristics in Dropout Cases among Secondary School Students in Vihiga County, Kenya. *Education and Research*, *4*(2), 75-100.
7. Orodho. (2012). *Enhancing access and participation in secondary schools among the poor and vulnerable through bursaries in Kenya.* Nairobi: IPAR.
8. Zorbaz, O., & Ozer, A. (2020). Do student characteristics affecting school dropout: risk differ from one school to another? *45*(202), 191-210.
9. Dagana, A. S., & Aden, A. Y. (2021). *The causes of female dropout in a secondary school in Dadaab Refugee Camp of Kenya.*
10. Ngamaba, K. H., Lombo, L. S., Lombo, G., & Viviar, N. E. (2021). Causes of school dropout in Kinshasa: students' perspectives before and after dropping out. *Journal of African Education, 2*(3).
11. Mahrool, F. (2020, December). Analysis of school dropout among secondary school students: case of Sammanthurai Education zone. *International Journal of academic Multidisciplinary research (IJAMR), vol.4*(issue 12), 79-85.
12. El-Shaer, G. M. A., & Radwa, M. Y. A. (2019). *Causes of the phenomenon of school dropout among Girls and its impacts in rural areas of El-Ayat District, Giza Governorate.* Cairo.
13. Ngare, N. N., Ayodo, T., & Koech, J. (2017). Free day secondary school education: causes of high dropout rates of students in secondary schools in Kipkelio subcounty, Kericho county,Kenya. *Kabarak Journal of Research and Innovation, 5*(1), 1-11.
14. Creswel, J. W., & Creswel, J. D. (2018). Researcg design: qualitative , quantitative an mixed approaches. Thosands oaks, CA:sage.
15. Orodho, A. (2003). *Elements of Education and social science Research methods.* Nairobi: Masola Publishers.
16. Orodho, J. (2002). *Enhancing access and participation in secondary schools among the poor and vulnerable through bursaries in Kenya.* Nairobi: IPAR.
17. Nikolopoulo, K. (2022). *What is purposive sampling?Definition and examples.* Retrieved from https://scribbr.com/methodology/purposive sampling/
18. Krajcie, R. V., & Morgan. (1970). Determining sample size for research activities. Educational adn Psychological measurement.
19. Giri, A., & Biswas, D. (2019). *Research methodology for social sciences.* Washington DC: Thousand oaks CA:sage.
20. Bhandari, P. (2021). *Questionnaire design, methods, types and examples.* Retrieved from http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/50
21. Barrington, B. L., & Hendricks, B. (2015). *Differentiating characteristics of high school graduates, dropouts, and nongraduates.* doi:10.1080/00220671.1989.108859
22. Pamplona, F. (2022). *How to include figures in research paper.* Retrieved from mithegraph.comlbloglhow-to-includefigures-in-a-research paperl.
23. NCES. (2022). *Status dropout rates. Condition of education. U.S.* Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences. Retrieved from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/coj.
24. Miquilena., & Lara, E. (2021). Teen pregnancy as a cause of school dropout/CAF.
25. ASG Editor. (2022). *What are the causes of school dropout?* allstudyguide.com. Retrieved September 3,2022.
26. CSADMIN. (2021). Dropping out of school causes, consequences, and solutions.
27. Blomberg, J. (2020). *Organization Theory: Management and Leadership Analysis.* Thosand Oaks, CA:sage.