

Household-Related Factors Leading to Students' Dropout from Mixed-Day Secondary Schools in Bomet East Sub-County, Kenya

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Abstract

Original Research Article

Education is a basic need to every citizen. However, dropout has been at the top barring all countries the world over in ensuring a hundred percent literacy rates. The Kenyan government has since independence come up with various policies in a bid to increase access and retention rate: Free primary Education (2003), Free Day Secondary Education (2008) and a 100% transition rate policy (2018) from primary school to secondary. This study sought to investigate Household – related factors leading to Students' Dropout from Mixed-Day Secondary Schools in Bomet East Sub-County, Kenya for the period between the year 2020 and 2023. This study tried to determine the reasons as to why students drop out of school and suggested recommendations on what can be done about it. The study was based on The Classical Theory of Equal Opportunities and Social Darwinism that is predicated on a philosophy that everyone has fair and equal access to a good quality education regardless of social background, race, gender, or religion, and where people achieve success in education according to their efforts and ability, free from any form of discrimination. Descriptive Research Design was used. Questionnaires and interview schedules were used to collect data from the sampled respondents in sampled Mixed Day Secondary schools. Piloting was carried out. Percentages and Frequencies were used to analyze the data with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). It was found out that the following household-related factors lead to student's dropout; female genital mutilation, early marriages, child labour and cultural beliefs. The study suggests five recommendations to curb school dropouts. The findings are hoped to add new knowledge and benefit the teachers, school principals and other school stakeholders to put necessary measures in place to curb the dropout problem.

Keywords: Household-Related Factors, Students' Dropout, Mixed-Day, Secondary Schools.

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INTRODUCTION

Drop out is a major setback to any country's education system. It is an indicator of wastage especially if governments offer full support to basic education as is the case with many countries. Dropping out of educational system is a serious individual, familial, educational and social problem [1]. There is substantial literature regarding how poverty, child labour and status of the parents impact on educational outcome regardless of the gender of the children. Household wealth affects both the costs and benefits of schooling and also determines if families can afford both the direct and opportunity costs of children attending school [2]. Likewise, there was a 0.20 decrease for children from households where head had at least secondary education compared to those from households where heads had no formal education other

factors constant [3]. Similarly, a study by [4] revealed that 52.60% of those who had dropped out came from households where the head only completed primary education. Nevertheless, a study by [5] on gender analysis of school dropout and out-of-school rates in Koshi basin, Nepal revealed that the dropout rate in junior secondary level and senior level were 4.4% and 3.7% respectively as a result of poverty and the increased demand for agriculture labour due to higher male outmigration. The high level of dropout in secondary level might be due to poverty as parents from the lower economic background mobilize their children in economic activities to support their families [5].

In Malawi, lower secondary school completion rate is low (23%), especially for children living in the poorest households (3 per cent) [6]. Only 10 per cent of children of upper secondary school age attend upper

secondary school or a higher level and the upper secondary completion rate is very low (4%), especially for poor households (less than 1% for children living in households in the first three wealth quintiles [6]. A study by [3] on non-school factors associated with school dropouts in Uganda revealed that household head's education, determined children's education. Children from households with heads that attained at most primary education had a 0.16 decrease in the predicted probability of dropping out of school compared to those from households whose heads had no formal education other factors constant [3]. A study by [7] in Murang'a East Subcounty on household income level revealed that most secondary school drop-outs (60.30%) were as a result of family economic status.

The literature obtained by the researcher revealed that the household factors play a major role in ensuring children's completion or dropout from the secondary education. The literature reviewed clearly indicates that there were high dropout rates in poor households as compared to well-to-do families. On the contrary there was a dearth in literature which gave probable remedy to the current state. The purpose of this study therefore was to investigate the specific household factors leading to learners' dropout from Mixed-Day secondary schools in Bomet East Sub-County and provide probable solutions to the state of affairs in order to help the poor households to achieve their dreams and meet SDGS.

This study was based on Classical Theory of Equal Opportunities and Social Darwinism. The theory that is predicated on a philosophy that everyone has fair and equal access to a good quality education regardless of social background, race, gender or religion, and where people achieve success in education according to their efforts and ability, free of any form of discrimination. Therefore, educational systems should be fair. The theory advocates for free and compulsory basic education. Most countries, including Kenya, have thus tried to honour the theory by coming with various education policies that ensures compulsory and non-discriminatory basic education.

In Sri Lanka, many families are very poor and mostly live under poverty line therefore the parents tend to move abroad for employment which forces their elder daughters' dropout out of school in order to look after the siblings while male students also have to go to work as a child labor [8]. Similarly, economic hardship is a major problem for school dropout in Bangladesh whereby about 31.5% people are living below the poverty line [9]. The livelihood is very hard for the people where the price hike of a daily necessary commodity is a regular matter thus people are bound to spend their earning for purchasing essential commodity by reducing the cost of education [9].

[10], in their study in Nine Years basic education in Rwanda found out that the main family related causes of dropout are: Domestic violence, Poverty in the family, Household much work, Irresponsible parents. In addition, a study by [11] revealed that financial constraints, low level of education of parents, disputes within a family, separation or divorce of parents, lack of school requirements such as stationery or uniforms, sickness in family, lack of participation in school activities (such as consultations), lack of academic role models in families, death of parents, lack of supervision of school work and lack of motivational words by parents, alcohol and substance abuse by parents, lack of reading materials at home and lack of reading time were cited by respondents as the general contribution factors in school dropouts at family level. Based on this literature, the researchers sought to examine the household-related factors leading to Students' Dropout from Mixed-Day Secondary Schools in Bomet East Sub-County, Kenya.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed descriptive research design. A descriptive research design can use a wide variety of research methods to investigate one or more variables by observing and measuring [12]. Descriptive research design is a method of collecting information by interviewing or administering a questionnaire to a sample of individuals [13]. The goal of descriptive research is to provide a comprehensive and accurate picture of the population or phenomenon being studied and to describe the relationships, patterns, and trends that exist within the data [14].

This design was considered appropriate for this study because it offers an opportunity to obtain information from mixed day secondary schools' head teachers, teachers and students on the household factors leading to school dropouts in Bomet East Sub-County, Kenya. This study was carried out in Bomet East Sub County which is the largest of the five sub-counties of Bomet County. Due to its high dropout rates, the sub county was purposively chosen as the study site. The government introduced 100% transition policy in 2018 on top of Free Day Secondary School Education (FDSE) policy of 2008 to ensure 100% transition rate and completion rates too. The researcher thus employed stratified sampling to select mixed day secondary schools over the other types of schools because this category of schools largely benefited from the government's aforementioned policies. The target population was all the Principals, teachers and students from 25 public mixed day secondary schools in Bomet East Sub County since they had one on one interaction with those who dropped out.

In these schools, there were 25 Principals, 375 teachers comprising 251 males and 124 females and 4896 students comprising 2574 boys and 2322 girls.

Purposive sampling was used in the study to select sub county schools from which the participants were randomly selected. A purposive sample is a non-probability sample that is selected based on characteristics of a population and the objective of the study [15]. Sampling frame of head teachers, teachers, and students from sampled schools was first developed. [16] table of determining sample sizes was used to determine the appropriate sample sizes. Respondents were then randomly selected. A simple random sampling is a method where each member of the

population has an exactly equal chance of being selected [17]. 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 25, 375 and 4896 respectively. Basing on [16] table, 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 randomly.

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

Questionnaires and interview schedules were used in data collection. Questionnaires were administered to sampled class teachers and students. The questionnaire was preferred for its suitability to this study. Questionnaires were preferred since they can be used to collect both quantitative and qualitative data regarding demographic information, opinions, and preferences [18]. Due to the nature of principals' administrative duties, interview schedules were preferred. Structured interviews are fairly quick to conduct which means that many interviews can take place within a short amount of time [19]. The researcher followed all the research protocols before embarking on data collection; obtaining a letters of authorization to conduct research, and eventually obtaining clearance from Bomet East Sub-County Director of Education. The schools involved in the study were visited by the researcher for introduction to the principal who in turn introduced the researcher to the teachers and students.

On completion of data collection and before embarking on compiling and coding the data, the researcher checked the data for completeness of the questionnaires. The quantitative and qualitative data were arranged and grouped according to the particular

research questions. Coding was done by use of numerical values to make data reduction possible and manageable for analysis. They were then 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

This section presents data on the household practices in the community leading to students' dropout from mixed day secondary schools in Bomet East Sub-County as presented by the respondents. Descriptive statistics was used in data analysis and reporting of findings in form of a figure. Using of figures and tables in research papers serves the purpose of providing illustrative description of the subject matter and present data visually to make readers understand technical information and the context in an easy way [20]. Figure 1 presents findings of data collected from sampled principals, teachers and students in the sampled schools with regards to household-related factors leading to dropout in the schools.

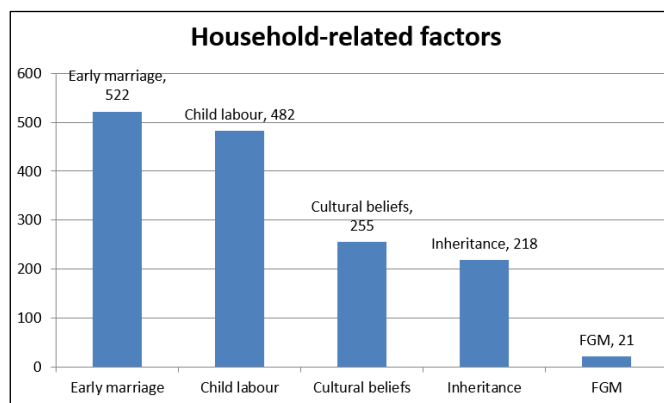


Figure 1: Data on household-related factors leading to dropout

From figure 1, five household practices leading to students' dropout from mixed day secondary schools in Bomet East Sub-County were identified. The identified household practices are early marriages, child labour, early inheritance, cultural beliefs and female genital mutilation (FGM). Early marriage was stated by 522 (93.21%), child labour 482 (86.07%), cultural beliefs by 255 (45.54%), early inheritance by 218 (38.93%), and Female genital mutilation by 21 (3.75%) of the respondents.

DISCUSSION

The following household characteristics were identified as determinants of dropout listed from the strongest determinant downwards; Early marriage, child labour, cultural beliefs, early inheritance and Female genital mutilation. Majority of the respondents stated early marriage as the major household determinant of students' dropout. This finding agrees with some other researchers' findings. [21], in their study on 'Incidence of Early Marriage Induced Girl Dropouts at Secondary Level...' found that 80.91% of the respondents cited early marriage as a major cause of dropout. Similarly, a study by [22] on determinants of school dropout among secondary school girls in Kibra and Langata in Nairobi County, Kenya revealed that early marriages at tender age had also contributed to girl child drop out in the region. Fifty (50%) of the respondents in a study by [23] are of the opinion that early marriage should be discouraged as a way of eradicating female drop out from secondary school.

Child labour was cited by 86.07% of the respondents in this study as the second in leading to students' dropout in Bomet East Sub County. This finding agrees with [24] report which states that the number of children in child labour has risen to 160 million worldwide – an increase of 8.4 million children in the last four years – with millions more at risk due to the impacts of COVID-19. Similarly, 76.6% of the respondents in a study by [25] agreed that students drop out of school was because of child labour. Cultural beliefs were cited as another household factor leading to school dropout. In a study by [22] on 'Determinants of school dropout among secondary school girls in Kibra and Langata in Nairobi county, Kenya', (98.3%) of the respondents cited cultural practices and beliefs as a major cause of girls dropout in the region nevertheless.

On the other hand, early inheritance was cited by 38.93% of the respondents. This finding agrees with the findings of other researchers. In a study by [25] 66.7% continuing students agreed that they own tree farms as their inheritance from parents/ guardians who are still present or those who already passed away; is like a culture in Makete district for parents/guardians to give tree farms to their children as an inheritance,

something which might fuel the increasing cases of school dropout and child labour. Finally, female genital mutilation was cited by the lowest percentage 21 (3.75%) of the respondents. This finding concurs with the findings of other researchers. Few participants pointed female genital mutilation as a cultural factor leading girls' dropout out school [26]. Similarly, [27] found out that girls who undergo through FGM engage in relationships thus 70%, and 60% of teachers and head teachers respectively indicated that majority of girls drop out of school due to early pregnancies.

CONCLUSION

From the findings, indeed there are household factors that force 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 household characteristics were in the following order: 1. Early marriage 2. Child labour, 3. Cultural beliefs, 4. Early inheritance, and 5. Female Genital Mutilation. Based on these findings, the following five recommendations have been suggested:

1. Parents should be sensitized more on the importance of education over early marriage.
2. Existing Laws and new ones should be enforced to curtail child labour.
3. Parents and the society at large should be enlightened that culture can be more understood by the educated.
4. Parents should be discouraged from bequeathing school-going sons/daughters property
5. Female Genital Mutilation should be completely done away with through all means

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