

Factors Influencing School Dropout in Primary Schools in Rongai Division, Nakuru District

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Abstract

This study was carried out to investigate teacher's perception of factors influencing school drop outs in primary schools in Rongai Division, Nakuru District. Evidence from the background indicated the existence of high cases of number of school dropouts in Rongai Division. The study was designed as an ex-post facto; hence the researcher did not manipulate any perceived casual factors to dropout. The study targeted 43 primary schools, in the Division, whose head teachers and class teachers participated in the study. In total 36, Head teachers and 72 teachers were interviewed. The analysis of the data revealed several factors that contributed to the increase of dropout cases in Rongai Division. The study made pertinent recommendations that can help curb the problem and critical suggestions for further research that can school dropout cases are controlled not only in Rongai Division but in other parts of Kenya. With the findings, the researcher puts the challenge to all stakeholders in the field of education to act to eradicate the problem of drop out countrywide.

Key words: Influencing, Dropout, Primary, schools.

Introduction

The UN Charter states that everybody has the right to education. According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 28 of 1979, education should be free at least in the elementary and fundamental stage. In qualitative term, Kenya has maintained a comparatively good record in primary education (Addis Ababa Report and UNESCO Conference 1968 p.20). Among other concerns, Millennium development goals (MDGs) targets to ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling (Sifuna 2003). The free education program in Kenya was reintroduced by the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) government 2002. Despite the government efforts to keep children in schools, research done in the past has indicated incidents of school dropout.

Atieno Kili K'Odhiambo (1988:2) in his research indicated that dropout are wasted even if the said individual acquired some education prior to dropping out, because they may not have acquired the necessary skills, knowledge and attitudes to effectively

participate in the social and economic development of the nation. Rumberger, Russell W (1987), found that by leaving school prior to completion, the dropouts had educational deficiencies that severely limited their economic and social well being throughout their adult lives. The researcher aimed at studying the permanent dropout cases, that is, those who abandon school as opposed to repeaters in Rongai Division of Nakuru District. Dropout in schools in Rongai Division of Nakuru District was of a great concern. The information obtained from the District Education Office indicated that dropout was greater in Rongai than other divisions such as Naivasha and Bahati.

Methodology

This study used an ex post facto research design. The study was ex-post facto in design because variables such as the level of education of parents, economic status of parents, among others which in one way or other contribute to school

dropout could not be manipulated. The researcher relied on events that have already taken place. Hence, the researcher did not manipulate any causal factors to dropout. The study targeted 43 primary schools, in the Division, whose head teachers and class teachers participated in the study. 36 schools were selected and simple random selection was used to determine the schools to constitute the sample from the 47 schools. In total 36, Head teachers and 72 teachers participated in the study.

Findings and Discussion

According to the teachers, 77.5% saw peer dropout as contributing to dropout, while 68% of teachers attributed dropout to alcohol. Other factors contributing to school dropout are poverty and social-economic hardship (68.9%), followed by poor performance (68.1%), single parenthood

(62.5%). Early pregnancies and marriages of girls (50.7%) also affected and contributed to girls' dropout. According to teachers, others causes which were more pronounced such as alcohol /drug abuse (68.9%) and poor attendance, seem to afflict boys more than girls. When teachers were asked if teachers contribute to drop out cases in schools, 28 5% head teachers denied while 2% responded in affirmative. Few who agreed that teachers contributed to cases of pupil dropping out pointed out that teachers' harshness and discouragement occasionally contributed to cases of pupils dropping out, and those failing to project a positive image discourage pupils to remain in school.

Table 1: Teachers Perception of Measures Taken by Schools to Curb School Dropout Cases in Rongai Division

Measure	Number of respondents	Percentage
Guiding and counseling of teachers in the school	26	81.3
Sensitization of parents on importance of education.	25	78.1
Sensitization of pupils on importance of education.	24	7.5
Occasional financial and material support.	3	9.4
Encouragement of free school attendance for poor pupils.	3	9.4

The study revealed that every school in Rongai Division has taken some measures to curb drop out incidences. The common measures so far identified by the head teachers and their teachers were;

- (i) Provision of guidance and counseling services through the appointment of guidance and counseling teachers in the schools (81.3% of the teachers)
- (ii) Sensitization of both the parents and the pupils on the need to take school seriously (78.1 % of those interviewed).

- (iii) Occasional material support for the poor pupils and their families through acts such as provision of food, uniforms and books(9.4 5 of the teachers interviewed)
- (iv) Exempting children from very poor families from paying levies and basic requirements such as uniforms (9.4 % of the teachers interviewed).

Table 2 Teachers' views on the measures the government can take to curb school drop outs in Rongai Division.

Measure	Percentage
Removal of all levies by the government.	25
Intensification of guidance and counseling in primary schools	20
Encouraging and sensitization of parents and pupils.	15
Introduction of free feeding programs in schools in the division.	10
Campaigning against and elimination of drug/alcohol abuse.	10
Discouraging and outlawing class repetition in schools.	6
Provision of more teachers and schools.	5
Gender sensitization of parents and community.	4
Increased parental responsibility and awareness.	4
Outlawing and elimination of child employment.	2

The teachers strongly agreed that removal of levies by the government would contribute to curbing the problem of school dropout (25%) and guidance and counseling of pupils against negative peer pressure (20%). Other possible solutions to school dropout included encouraging parents and pupils (15%), free feeding program in schools and campaigns against elimination of drug / alcohol abuse. Outlawing class repetition, provision of more teachers (5%), sensitization of parents and community (4%) , increasing parental responsibility (4%) and outlawing and elimination of child employment (2%) were also seen as possible solutions to the problem.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This study sought to investigate the particular factors that determine the dropout cases in Rongai Division, Nakuru District. The data collected identified several factors that contribute to the dropping out of pupils from schools as perceived by teachers. These include; Negative peer influence, drugs - especially alcoholism, poverty and social-economic hardships, among others. From the study teachers identified ways that parents and the community can curb dropout cases. These are: Provision of basic necessities and monitoring of their children's school attendance, campaigns against child labor, early marriages and drug abuse, use of family planning to respond to the economic

hardships .From the study the school can contribute to curbing the problem of school drop out by ; guidance and counseling programs by teachers, sensitization of parents and pupils on the importance of education , financial and material support and encouraging the government to provide free education. On the part of the government the teachers perceived the following as the possible solutions to the problems of school dropout; removal of all school levies from school, intensifying guidance and counseling in schools, free feeding school programs, campaigning against drugs/alcohol, outlawing class repetition, provision of more teachers in schools, and outlawing child employment among others. The free primary and secondary education has contributed positively to improve school attendance and retention rate. Miriam Gathigah (2010) in her research remarks that 2010 will go to record in the history of Kenya as the year when the 1st batch of pupils to benefit from Education (KCPE). The free primary education which is compulsory saw many children particularly from poor families enjoy an opportunity to be in school. Other measures taken by the government to improve retention rate include employment of more teachers, introduction of bursaries for needy

children, building more schools, enacting of children's act 2010 all which have contributed to the welfare of children and ensured that more children are attending and completing the education cycle. Although there is a significant development , particularly in light of the government 's efforts to respond to global priorities outlined in key framework documents such as the Millennium Development Goals there are glaring obstacles that are still keeping children to schools particularly girls according to Rosemary Muganda (2010), the

executive director of the centre for adolescent . According to the latest demographic health survey, 40% of adolescent girls without education are either pregnant or have already become mothers. In line with the research in Rongai Division currently Nakuru, the researcher suggested the following areas for further research; impacts of feeding school program in education, factors affecting girls' education and impacts of teachers' conduct on the enrolment.

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