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## Socio-Economic Factors That Influence Dropout among Boys in Secondary School in Muthambi Division

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### **Abstract:**

*A number of challenges including but not limited to declining completion rates, repetition and drop out in secondary education in Kenya has possibly led to wastage. This is likely to impact on the attainment of Education for All (EF A) goals. The purpose of this study was to establish the Socio- Economic factors that influence dropout among boys in public secondary schools in Muthambi Division, Maara District. Descriptive survey research design was used to gather information about the subject. The study was carried out in the 10 secondary schools within the division. The target population was 10 head teachers and 40 class teachers, 10 households' heads and 10 boys dropout selected through simple random sampling. The main data collection instrument was questionnaires, which were administered on the principals and class teachers. Document analysis was done to corroborate the information provided by the head teachers and class teachers on the number of the school dropouts. The findings from the study indicate that boys drop out in all the schools in the division. Some of the causes of dropout in schools include school fees, peer pressure, some disliked school among others. The recommendations given to curb the problem include: strengthening guidance and counseling in schools, parents should be more responsible, schools should provide programmes to support the boy child. Teachers and parents should work harder to make the learning environment more conducive in school and home.*

**Keywords:** Socio –economic factors, boys and drop out

### **1. Introduction**

The Government of Kenya (G.O.K) has supported provision of education as away of developing the human capital (Republic of Kenya, 1965). It supported the establishment of 'Harambee' schools, introduced cost-sharing between the government, parents and community and curriculum Rationalization (Republic of Kenya, 1999) as a way of making education cheaper, affordable and accessible. Recent policy initiatives have been keen on attaining education for all (EFA) with particular interest in equity, quality, relevance and internal and external efficiencies within the education system.

According to sessional paper no.I of 2005, on a policy framework for education training research, the government has a long term aim of providing every Kenyan with basic quality education and training, including a 2 year pre-primary education, 8 years of primary and 4 years of secondary/technical education. The provision of education has been seen as a way of reducing the income gap between the affluent and less fortunate. According to Woodhall, UNESCO-IIEP & International Development Authority, Swedish (2019) education also helps to eliminate poverty because it is an investment.

According to Gramani (2017) dropout and repetition have regressive effects on equity in the education system and the economic profiles of drop out and repeaters show the phenomenon is most common among students from low income socio-economic background. Various policy initiatives have been put in place to curb the dropout problem. These include cost sharing policy in secondary schools where the government takes care of tuition fees and the students only need to pay for their upkeep in schools. Establishment of Bursary award from Government to students through constituencies and establishment of more day schools are not adequate in solving the problem of drop out in schools. The fear in the escalating drop out in secondary schools is that the education system will actually perpetuate and increase inequality. Nationally drop out leads to unemployment. Many factors could be responsible for student dropout in secondary schools. These include poverty, administration problems in schools, and the background of the student, among others. If the dropout is not checked it will reduce the public and private and social benefits of education. The youth that drop out could enter into socially unacceptable activities such as; stealing, prostitution and illegal trade.

Kenya is signatory to the MDGs thus adequate measures should be put in place to bring equity in education provision by increasing survival, completion, transition rates and reducing drop-out. Many governments in developing

countries allocated a big portion of their Gross Domestic Product to education after independence which has enabled considerable growth in educational activities (UNESCO, 2000). In Kenya, most of the budgetary allocation goes to education. In 2003 the government abolished payment of fees in primary schools in the country which is a very significant step toward achieving Universal Primary Education (UPE) which is also a human right and a millennium development goal. At the beginning of 2008 the government subsidized the cost of education in secondary schools making it more affordable particularly in day schools where the students only pay for their lunch, uniforms and other hidden costs in education. Although there has been a heavy investment in the education sector, and the resultant quantitative expansion of education the country still faces a number of challenges, which are mainly associated with wastage. Wastage in education can be categorized into 3 major components. These are non-enrolment, repetition and dropout in schools.

According to Orodho (2005, p. 96) solving the problem of high dropouts will help the government to attain Universal basic Education for All [EFA]. This can help the country to enhance its drive for attaining the status of newly industrialized countries by the year 2030. Some of the studies have been carried out on access and retention of students in secondary schools. These studies are skewed towards the girl-child and indeed there are programmes by the government, NGOs and communities to address the plight of the girls in respect to education. Social cultural attitudes and practices have been found to have a big influence on these issues. According to Mushi (2002), African communities largely have a male-preference attitude. Males are expected to be able to do wonders in the world of knowledge and technology while a woman's place is at home, and keeping up with the livelihood of the family. Dropouts due to early marriage and teenage pregnancies are a common feature.

According to UNESCO (2002), poverty keeps many children from gaining access to education, while, at the same time, education is the cornerstone for overcoming poverty and inequity. The above statement is supported by the UNESCO background paper which poses that "poverty cannot be overcome without specific, immediate and sustained attention to enhancing access to education." As a result of poverty, children are subjected to domestic obligations that cost them time, such as caring for their siblings while parents go out to work for the family income, taking care of the sick and attending to traditional rituals and funerals and other celebrations. The high demand of children at home contributes to their low enrolment, poor participation, performance and, in many cases, they dropout before completion. Mbilinyi (2003) noted that the school factors such as school curriculum, physical environmental factors, teachers and teaching/learning materials affect retention. However the boy-child has been largely ignored. This study will thus shed light on the causes of dropouts among boys in Mutharnbi Division and measures to be taken to arrest the problem.

### *1.1. Statement of the Problem*

Since the introduction of Free Secondary Education in the year 2008 the secondary school sub-sector still faces some challenges. Free secondary school education was meant to improve access and retention and progress towards the achievement of EFA. However, dropout problem remains an impediment. Increase in enrolment in primary schools due to FPE has resulted in the expansion of existing Secondary Schools and construction of more schools. However, some secondary schools do not experience automatic high or increased enrolments, and their population is perpetually low. Some are said to have experienced drop out in student enrolment and are operating below capacity with the element of wastage i.e. half-filled classes, dormitories and unused furniture. This is a concern to education stakeholders including the researcher, not only in the Division, but also in the whole country. Despite the introduction of various safety nets in education, dropout in schools persists. A research on the problem would be important in completing the development of government policy on education to enable it achieve EFA.

### *1.2. Objectives of the Study*

- To establish the level of dropout among boys in Muthambi Division.
- To determine the socio-economic factors that affect boy's secondary school dropout in Muthambi Division.

### *1.3. Research Questions*

- What is the level of dropout between boys and girls in Muthambi Division.
- What are the socio-economic factors that affect boys' retention in secondary schools in Muthambi Division?

### *1.4. Theoretical Framework*

The study was based on the two-factor theory (also known as Herzberg's-hygiene theory) which states that there are certain factors in the workplace that cause job satisfaction, while a separate set of factors cause dissatisfaction and job dissatisfaction act independently of each other. Two-factor theory distinguishes between motivators (e.g. challenging work, recognition, responsibility) that give positive satisfaction arising from intrinsic conditions of the job itself, such as recognition, achievement or personal growth. Hygiene factors (e.g. status job security, salary, fringe benefits, work conditions) that do not give positive satisfaction though dissatisfaction results from their absence. Essentially hygiene factors are needed to ensure there is no dissatisfaction. Motivation factors are needed to motivate one to higher performance. Thus schools should provide both hygiene and motivational needs of the students. This theory was found relevant to the study because students should be constantly motivated so as they remain in school.

## 1.5. Literature Review

### 1.5.1. Socio - Economic Factors

Poverty keeps many children from gaining access to education, while at the same time education is the cornerstone for overcoming poverty and inequity. The above statement is supported by the UNESCO background paper which states that "poverty cannot be overcome without specific, immediate and sustained attention to enhancing access to education" (UNESCO, 2002). Therefore poverty is a serious problem for children and the inability to meet direct costs for schooling. The first one that is the opportunity cost for children which mainly affect girls. Due to a high demand for the girl's service at some parents become reluctant to send them to school, or just to give them enough time for school activities.

According to a study done recently girls in almost every African region, girls work (at home) more than boys, regardless of whether they are school going (World Bank, 2002). In Zambia, girls spend four times more time than boys on direct productive work (Blackden & Bhanu, in World Bank, 2002). The most striking thing is that the outcome of the "productive work" is not spent on the girl's development. The absurdity of drop out from school by students of poor families who are unable to sustain their children in secondary school, is well captured by economist John Simmons, as quoted by Todaro (1982, p. 267). He gives a sketch of how the poor are beginning to view education;

Schooling, the poor quickly learns, in most countries, is an escape from poverty for only a few. The poor are first to drop out because they need to work, the first to be pushed out because they fall asleep in class, first to fail their French or English tests because upper income children have better opportunities at home. The hope brought to village by construction of a school soon fades. Enough schooling to secure a steady, even menial job for their son, let alone for their daughter, seems just beyond their grasp. Before any schooling would have done to achieve their aspiration. Now a primary school certificate is needed and some are saying that even some students with secondary schooling cannot get a steady job; and they could never afford to send their son away to town for secondary schooling. Thus this study seeks to find out whether the dropout of boys from school is due to poverty.

## 1.6. Research Methodology

### 1.6.1. Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design to investigate the socio- economic factors that contribute to dropout among boys. Survey studies, gather data at particular point in time with the intention of describing the nature of the existing condition (Orodho, 2005). The descriptive design is one of the most commonly used methods of descriptive research in behavioral science since it enables the researcher to gather qualitative and quantitative data. Thus, this method assisted the researcher to produce statistical information on dropout rates among the boys in secondary schools.

### 1.6.2. Target Population

Muthambi division has 9 mixed schools and one boys' school and this constituted the unit of analysis. Population comprised 10 principals of these schools, all the class teachers and the boys who had dropped out.

### 1.6.3. Sampling Procedure

According to Sommer (1986), a sample is a small group selected for testing. Borg (1986) defines sampling as a research technique used for selecting a given number of subjects from a target population as a representative of that population. Any statements made about the sample should be true of the population (Orodho 2003). The researcher was limited to 10 schools within the division where 9 schools are mixed and only one boys' school. All the head teachers of the 10 schools were purposively selected in the sample. The researcher identified 10 households that have at least one boy who had dropped out of school. The parents/guardians as well as one boy who dropped out of school were interviewed. The head teacher and 4 other teachers filled questionnaires in each of the schools selected. Teachers were identified randomly in consultation with the head teacher. Thus the study sample was made up of 10 headteachers, 40 teachers who have also served at least for four years, 10 household heads and 10 dropouts who dropped in the last five years. This resulted into a sample size of 70 respondents.

### 1.6.4. Research Instruments

Research instruments are the tools used by a researcher to collect data for a given study. Kornbo and Tromp (2006), Points that research instruments include questionnaires, interview schedules, observation checklists and focus group discussions. The main research instrument that was employed in the study was the questionnaires and interview schedules. The questionnaire sought to get information from the respondents on the cases of drop out in their schools and the socio- economic factors that influence boys to drop out. The questionnaire was basically to collect data from the head teachers and class teachers, and two interview schedules guides were prepared to collect information from children who dropped out of school and their guardians\parents.

## 1.7. Findings

Findings are presented as per the study objectives

### 1.7.1 Level of Drop out among Boys

Class teachers were involved in providing this information. Table 1 presents data on the level of drop outs among boys for a period between 2006 – 2010 in Muthambi Division

YEAR	CLASSES				
	BOYS	F1	F2	F3	F4
2006	32	7	12	9	4
2007	41	11	17	8	5
2008	27	4	8	9	6
2009	30	3	12	11	4
2010	24	2	8	11	3

Table 1: Level of Drop out among Boys

Table 1 shows boys who dropped out of school for a period of five years. The year 2007 recorded the highest number of drop out at 41 while the year 2010 recorded the least number of 24. This could be attributed to introduction of Subsidized education in Secondary schools. There was a drop in the year 2009 and 2010. Free Day Secondary Education was introduced in the year 2008. Thus students started benefiting. Those who dropped out earlier due to school fees were now cushioned and remained in school hence the drop.

### 1.7.2. Socio-Economic Factors That Affect Boy's Retention in Schools Muthambi Division.

The first objective of this study was to establish the socio-Economic factors that affect boy's retention in secondary schools in Muthambi Division. The first part was to establish the people living with the dropouts.

#### 1.7.2.1. Information on Dropouts

Thirteen dropouts took part in the study. The table below shows the person who took care of the dropouts while they were in school.

	No. of Dropouts	Percent
Parents	4	30.77%
Grandparents	5	38.46%
Stepmother	3	23.08%
Sister	1	7.6%

Table 2: People Living with Dropout

The findings in Table 2 shows that 4(30.77%) of the drop outs lived with their parents, 5 (38.46%) lived with their grandparents, 3 (23.08%) lived with their step mother and 1 (7.6%) lived with the sister. This shows that nine boys did not live with their parents. Inferences from literature indicate that for any society to achieve its educational objectives, parents and other community members should give full support to their children's education. Most mothers do not communicate directly with their sons. Mingat (2002) argues that children of mothers with formal education have an attendance rate of 71% compared to 47% for children whose mothers did not attend school. Avotri et al., (1999) point that strong support have a very positive influence on their children's participation in education.

#### 1.7.2.2. Reasons as to Why They Dropped Out of School

The dropouts were asked give reasons why they dropped out of school. Their responses are indicated on Figure 1

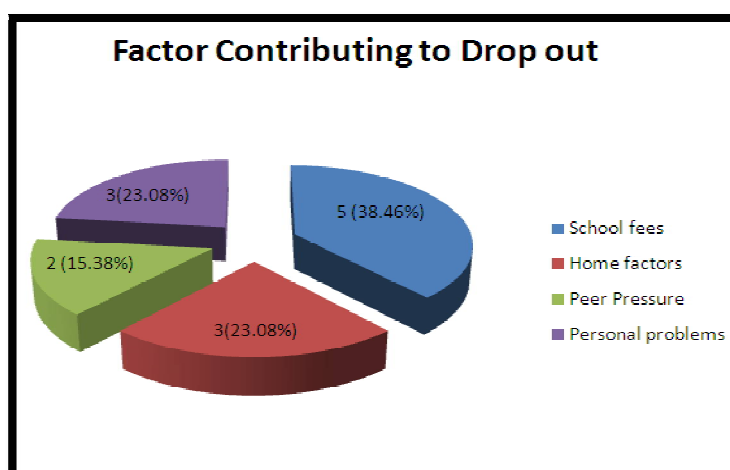


Figure 1: Reasons as to Why They Dropped Out of School

Information in Figure 1 shows that 5 (38.46%) dropped out of school due to school fees, 3 (23.077%) dropped out due to home factors 2 (15.38%) due to peer pressure and 3 (23.077%) due to personal problems. From the findings, school fees were the leading cause of boys' dropout. This is irrespective of the government policy of subsidized secondary education. This is an indication that education is still not affordable to some. Home factors and peer pressure is another cause: Further investigation from the interviews revealed that they included divorce and separation among the parents, drunkenness by parents which leads to negligence of children and parental lack of interest in educating their children. Parents opted to involve their children in other activities that they considered more beneficial than being in school. These included doing businesses, farming. Peer pressure is another cause. Some boys were influenced by their friends into drug trafficking and miraa businesses. Thus a number of boys have dropped out due to their friends. Others have dropped out due to personal problems such as not being interested in education failing in school and being forced to repeat.

### 1.7.2.3. Activities Dropouts Engaged in

An attempt was made to establish the activities that the drop outs were engaged in. The information is presented in Figure 2;

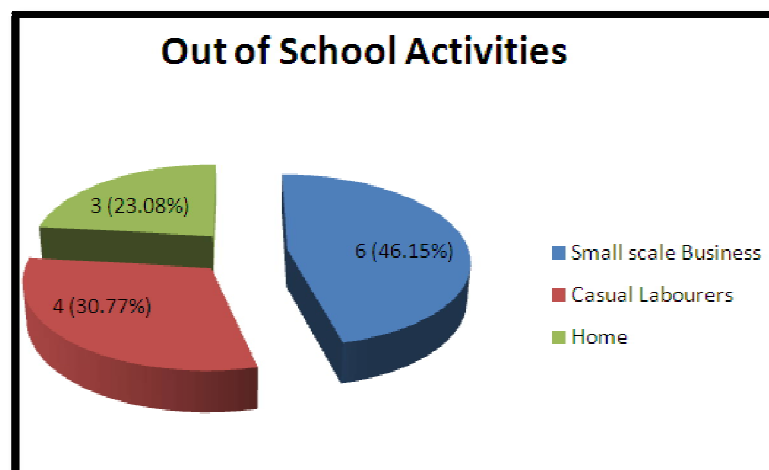


Figure 2: Out of School Activities for the Drop Outs

Findings in Figure 2 indicate that 6 (46.15%) of the dropouts were engaged in their small personal businesses. This includes small shops, miraa stores and tobacco business. 4 (30.77%) were casual labourers in the locality and 3 (23.08%) were just at home. Those who just stayed at home were completely under drugs. They therefore can't do anything for their survival

## 2. Conclusion

From the research findings there are interplay of factors that have led boy's dropout. These can be linked to several social economic factors and not limited to school fees, peer pressure, home factors and personal problems.

## 3. Recommendations

In light of the findings the paper recommends that;

- Guidance and counseling should be strengthened in school.
- More boys' schools should be constructed.
- The school administration should ensure strict discipline in school.
- There should be programmes to support the boy child.
- The boys who have dropped out of school should be encouraged to go back.
- The parents and guardians should be monitor what their sons do both at home and at school.

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