

Influence of Peer Pressure on Secondary School Students Drop out in Rongo Sub-County, Migori County, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to establish the influence of peer pressure on secondary school students' drop out in Rongo Sub-County, Migori County, Kenya. The statement of the problem showed that the sub-county had a dropout rate of 43 percent as compared to the neighboring sub counties like Uriri, Awendo, Nyatike, Kuria and Migori which had 25, 9, 27, 23 and 28 percent respectively despite the similar government's strategies availed to all the public secondary schools and the coverage of the same syllabus throughout the country. The study involved forms 3 and 4 students as they have been in school long enough to understand the schooling process. The descriptive design which involved qualitative strategies to data collection was employed. 755 students, teachers and head teachers were targeted for the study. A sample of 235 respondents was identified as follows, 200 students, 20 principals and 15 class teachers. Both probability and non-probability sampling techniques were used for various respondents. Data collection was done using questionnaires and interview schedules as the main research instruments. The data was analyzed using frequencies and percentages presented in tables and discussed. A cross sectional research design was used the findings revealed that peer pressure influenced student drop out was at 43.75%. High dropout was as a result of parent/ guardian financial status and family headship which lead to inadequate guidance/ mentorship to the students. The study concluded that in most cases where students are most often sent home there are high chances that some never returned to school and most schools did not support the learners who were coming from poor background. It can therefore be concluded that socio-economic factors highly influence the retention of students in secondary school. Recommendations called for the collaborative efforts by the government and other education stakeholders to support and provide for the learners who cannot afford the rising financial challenges of learning. Guidance and counseling, close interactions with the teachers by the students, proper syllabus content delivery are other measures to be upheld. The government should employ more teachers to help curb the discrepancies of teacher students' ratio. The research considered confidentiality and avoided plagiarism of any kind.

Key words: Influence, peer pressure, drop-out, secondary, school, Kenya

Introduction

The dropout problem has caused negative economic development and resulted to wasted talents and the incompetent labor force in most parts of the world. This can be evidenced by economic and social stagnation in some parts of the world. Processes of change brought by student dropout have become so rapid and intense that they give rise to major social economic challenges which can have disruptive effects on traditional lifestyles, morals, religious beliefs and everyday patterns without clear new values (Barton, 2005).

A study carried out by Mooney, Knox, and Schacht (2007), in the United States of America indicates that 13 percent of 16 to 24 years old dropout of high schools. They are not presently enrolled in any school and the dropout rate is as high as 55 percent a clear declaration that society and the educational institutions are not providing for the welfare of its entire student (Giddens, 2009). However in the Netherlands, the dropout rate is near 0 percent due to stable and balanced socio-economic factors (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2004). In a survey done by Bruneforth (2006), on Burkina, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, and Nigeria on the characteristics of children who drop out of school, more than half of all children aged 10 to 19 years left secondary school without completion this was majorly due to lack of a combination of social and economic factors more specifically to income and social position. The low enrolment rate over the last decade in Kenya's secondary schools has been caused by high cost (The average annual unit cost for secondary education is five times higher than primary education) and poverty with an estimated 30 percent dropout rate, due to these socio-economic factors alone (Sessional Paper No 1 of 2005). Studies done by Ombuya, Yambo and Omolo (2012) indicated that many of the high school learners are going under challenging conditions with a relative lack of adult guidance and support. Every secondary school in Kenya has its own culture and have been allocated the task of achieving social equality, overcoming material disadvantages and eradicating prejudice (Giddens, 2011), as it is not the individual that suffers as a result of dropping out but also does the society. Table 1 shows the number of students who have dropped out from secondary schools in Migori county due to various

socio-economic factors.

Table 1: The number of students who have dropped out of secondary school in Migori County

Years	Uriri	Rongo	Awendo	Nyatike	Kuria	Migori
2008	4	7	2	9	5	-
2009	3	9	-	3	2	8
2010	8	8	4	11	9	12
2011	4	10	3	2	3	5
2012	6	9	-	2	4	3
TOTAL	25	43	9	27	23	28

SOURCE: *Migori County Education Office- 2012*

Table 1.1 shows that 43 students dropped out from secondary school in Rongo District for the last five years. This number is higher as evidenced in comparison to Awendo, Kuria, Uriri, Nyatike and Migori districts respectively and therefore poses an academic concern. The work of Odhiambo and Yambo (2012) while considering the plight of girls in schools, found that there was a growing evidence that high rates of HIV/AIDS infections and socio-economic status in the then, Nyanza Province specifically, Rongo District were due to, in part, the weakened health of impoverished people. Due to the death caused by the above infection, families are left to be headed by young children, who may be economically unstable and at the same time attending secondary education, or single mothers/fathers thus increasing the tendency to drop out of secondary school (Obunga (2011)).

Statement of the Problem.

Ideally, peer pressure from positive minded people have an impact. An environment with indifference, ignorance, social discord, improper family care and guidance, permit deviant behavior among the youth. This make a student grow as an ill-trained person, socially maladjusted or fiddle minded individual and uncaring to an extent. The ability of such a student to learn is greatly impaired. The government's efforts through the Ministry of Education to appoint a guidance and counseling teacher in all schools with an aim of helping students to overcome this challenge. Moreover, the government also help learners at all levels so as to remain in school and complete their studies. This has been evidenced by provision of bursaries, school feeding programs, classrooms built by Constituency Development Funds (CDF) and provision of subsidized secondary school fees. Despite all these efforts and attempts, the influence negative peer pressure has been still persisting hence therefore a need to establish the influence of peer pressure on secondary school students' drop out in Rongo Sub-County, Migori County, Kenya.

Peer influence and students dropout

Peer influence among secondary students, which is a kind of a social pressure on them to adopt a type of behavior, dress, or attitude in order to be accepted as part of a group, affects them either positively or negatively. The work of Castillo (2010) suggested that there are students who influence others positively as they display discipline and become role models for others to emulate or negatively as they portray social problems like immoral behavior because at this level, the youths seek to establish their independence from their parents due to new life styles, growth of unruly character epitomized by drug addiction, alcoholism, wild cat, strikes in schools and carefree sex behaviors. Peer pressure which can bring about dropping out of school is one of the most serious important issues being emphasized by the developing governments of the world (UNICEF, 2001). However, certain factors encroach in and impede the educational progress of young people in the society. Such factors include, early marriages, pre-marital sex leading to pregnancy, socio-cultural factors, and geographical factors among others. A research carried out by Drewry, (2007) to examine the extent to which peer pressure influence school dropout in USA revealed dropouts reported significantly higher rates of cigarette, marijuana and other illicit drug usage than student who graduated from high school. According to Ombuya et al. (2012) they emphasized that implicit in this difference, may include the socio-economic factors like continued poverty, inadequate housing, peer influence, lack of parental guidance as well as being underserved within other services by the school management.

Other studies by Duflo, Pascalia, and Michael (2010) Yambo and Tuitoek (2014) on gender gaps in education also realized that adolescent pregnancy brought by peer influence mostly results in the dropping out of girls' and their continuity to secondary school education. Many of such girls end up in marriage or abandoned at home without any academic achievement realized. Similarly, boys are equally endangered because when they drop out of school they engage in some activities which are detrimental to their dear lives and prone to poor

health hazards (Kadzamira and Schiwana, 2000).

When discussing how peer influences students' choices, Castillo (2010), Mooney et al. (2007) and FAWE (1994) stated that the kind of friends that the students in high school make differs according to students gender, social class, race-ethnicity and academic background. Consequently, some students are more likely to have friends who are careless about school learning and are less likely to associate with peers who care about school. The students may drop out of secondary school due to pressure of rejection by peer making them to feel lonely and disassociated from having friends to fit with into a group (Mutwol, Cheserek, Boit, & Mining 2012).

In considering parent-child relationship Castillo (2010) and Okoth and Yambo (2016) postulated that sometimes unknowingly, a parent may put too much pressure on their son or daughter by trying to drive them in the opposite direction as opposed to the clique they belong to and often the student can fail to meet these demands put upon him or her particularly on educational matters. Each of these problems can be resolved because education is extremely important to the victim in the future. Furthermore, Mudis and Yambo (2015) found out that the students are bullied by their peer they can report first to the prefects and then to the school administration that will ensure that every student has a free and fare learning environment and bullying laws are put in place to protect the innocent and press charges on the bullies no matter their age or gender.

Peer pressures among students are of various natures. According to Ombuya et al. (2012) and Rumberge (2001) they asserted that, there are three main categories of peer influence that can lead to dropout. These include: Outside influences-brought by friends and peer pressure from other high school dropouts, lack of interest in gaining education and teen pregnancies which has accounted for a higher percentage of girls who drop out of secondary schools. These categories can only be managed by the head of the institutions with the support of the parents and other education stakeholders. Moreover, prefects and schools guidance and counseling masters are equally key in this regard (Mudis & Yambo 2015).

Rejected students by peers are normally discontented with themselves and their relationship with other students may be wanting. Results from different researchers including Rumberge (2001), Odhiambo and Yambo (2012) and Mudis and Yambo (2015) indicated that, on average, about 31 percent of low-accepted children drop out of school compared to 9 percent of other children (National Network for Child Care at Iowa State University, 2011). Parents and the school administration may need to seek professional psychological help for children suffering from negative peer influence by establishing a strong guidance and counseling department with skilled personnel and a good religious foundation.

Methodology

The research design of the study was descriptive survey, Bloomberg and Volpe (2008) states that this is a method of collecting information by interviewing or administering questionnaire to a sample of individuals. The design was identified as the most convenient and could ensure that the data obtained gave answers to the research questions. Descriptive survey is used when a researcher intends to describe a situation or a condition as it is (Kothari, 2004).

The study was carried out in 20 public secondary schools within Rongo Sub-county (Ministry of Education, 2013) with the following strata: girls boarding secondary 1, boys boarding secondary 4 and mixed day secondary schools were 15. The study targeted specifically 636 form three and form four students (because they have been in these schools long enough to give the needed information for this study). To generate data 20 principals from the secondary schools were involved, together with 40 teachers who were the class teachers for form threes and fours. The institutions were selected based on their geographical positions within the district and on the provision on the nature of the school (day/boarding mixed or boys/girls boarding) and therefore the findings was generalized for schools in the whole district.

In this study, three groups of respondents namely; students, principals, and class teachers were involved. The sample frame was 20 public secondary schools within Rongo Sub-County. The selection of principals was purposive because they are already known and are few in the area. Best and Kahn (2006) suggests that when the sample size is small, all the entities can be considered. To select the students, the researcher considered 30 percent of the total number of form threes and form fours within the district that were then picked through random sampling after obtaining a list of names from the class teachers. Similarly 30 percent of class teachers were picked through random sampling. The entire sampling matrix yielded a total of sample size of 235 for the purpose of the study. The researcher used table 3.2 for determining sample size of the populations given as:

Table 2. Sample size distribution of target population in Rongo Sub-County

Respondents	Target population	Sample size	Percent
Students	636	200	30
Principals	20	20	100
Class teachers	50	15	30
Total	706	235	

According to Amin (2004) questionnaires are useful in data collection. Two instruments were used to collect data for this study, these included questionnaires and interview schedules. To test for the reliability of research instruments, the researcher applied the test –retest technique. The same questions were administered to the same group within a time interval of two weeks (Orodho 2005). A reliability co-efficient was then calculated to indicate the relationship between two sets of scores obtained. Pearson product moment formula was used to calculate the correlation. Consequently, the correlation was 0.937 for the head teachers' s and 0.931 for the students' questionnaires were obtained indicating that the instruments were reliable for use.

After data collection, the responses to the questionnaire were coded, and then data was entered into the computer for analysis. Data was summarized, organized according to research questions, arranged into themes and resented narrative form. Tabular forms indicating averages, percentages and frequencies were used.

Results and Discussions

In this study, the researcher was interested in establishing the influence of peer pressure on secondary school students drop out. Many school dropouts have been attributed to negative peer influence on students by their colleagues who are indiscipline (Rumberge 2001). To gather more information head teachers and students were interviewed and gave the following responses:

Head teachers' opinions on peer pressure and student drop out.

The head teachers gave their opinions on how peer pressure influence drop out and come out with the following results.

Table 3. Head teachers' response on peer influence on secondary students drop our rate

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Very large extent	3	18.75
Large extent	7	43.75
Fairly large	2	12.5
Little extent	4	25.0
Not at all	-	-
Total	16	100

Table 3 shows that majority of the head teachers agreed that peer pressure largely influences students drop out, and none of the respondents stated that peer pressure did not influence drop out. This shows that peer pressure is a major socio-economic factor that influences drop out.

The researcher further wanted to find out the students reasons for their drop out. To respond to this the students were asked:

Students' opinions on class mates' dropout due to peers influence in their school.

Out of 150 students, 121 of them, that is 80.6 percent responded that peer pressure highly influence students' dropout. It could be noted that the students and head teachers were all aware that peer pressure highly influence students drop out as stated by Ombuya et al. (2012) and Rumberge (2001) that there are three major categories of peer influence that can lead to school dropout which included outside influence, lack of interest in gaining education and teen pregnancies. This is supported by a research done by Odhiambo and Yambo (2012) and Drewry, (2007).

Recommendations

The principals should improve student motivation by putting in place strategically and performance reward effectively.

The government and TSC can improve student retention by putting in place clear policies on education and employing more teachers to help keep close supervision on student which can help reduce dropout and curb the discrepancies that exist between the teacher student ratios.

Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) should introduce examinable talent courses in secondary schools as they will help the students who are intellectually challenged to get alternative areas where they can excel in while at school. The community should provide security to the student, teachers and other education stake holders to help deal with insecurity. That can be a threat to learners making them drop out.

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