

# **INFLUENCE OF SCHOOL RESOURCES ON STUDENTS' DROPOUT IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KIAMBU COUNTY, KENYA**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The Kenyan government acknowledges that there is need to enhance the education levels of its citizens in a bid to improve the livelihood of its citizens and to enhance the growth of the economy. Improved secondary education is essential in the enhancement of the education levels and skills of human capital in any nation. Unfortunately, in Kenya, the number of students leaving schooling without completing secondary education is quite alarming. The determination of this study was to assess the influence of school resources on students' drop-out in secondary schools in Kikuyu Sub-County. Exploration was based on the education production function theory. The study was conducted using descriptive survey design. The study was carried out in Kikuyu sub-county, Kiambu County and the target population was 28 principals and 427 teachers and 10400 students of public secondary school in Kikuyu Sub-County. To determine the sample size the research adopted the 10-30% of the universe which is

seen as representative. The sample therefore comprised of the 3 principals of the involved schools which is 10 percent of the 28 schools, 43 teachers which is 10 percent of the study's population of 427 teachers and 1040 students which is 10% of the 10400 student's population. The raw data needed for this study were collected with the help of pre-determined questionnaires and interviews. Piloting study was conducted with a hundred (100) students from Gichuru high school. The researcher used descriptive statistics where frequencies and percentages of responses were obtained through the use of SPSS. The study found that resources utilized in the passing and acquisition of knowledge was not enough in the institutions which negatively influenced dropout. The study recommended that there is a need for the provision of adequate resources to reduce the burden passed to the parents.

**Key Words:** *school resources, students' dropout*

## **INTRODUCTION**

A country's economic and social growth cannot be achieved in the absence of education. Thus, education is amongst the top priorities in the political agenda in many countries. Education is also a means to achieving other ends (Ball, 2017). For example, when a country has advanced in educational development she is likely to achieve other benefits such as economic growth, health, democracy and poverty eradication (Evans, 2018). The education of youth is today known as an effective way to investment in the development of any nation. It is an effective criterion that has been used by many countries to improve their social and economic growth (World Bank, 2018).

There is an interlinkage between health, education and economic development. For example, when youths are well educated they get the skills and tools they need to exercise their rights and gain access to services they are entitled to. Mothers who are educated are informed about the

immunization services available to their children and are 50% more likely to seek for such services compared to uneducated mothers. For every additional schooling year among mothers, there is a 5-10% drop in infant mortality (Keats, 2018).

Numerous global organizations recognize the right to education including organizations such as Education for All forums, the Beijing Platform for Action and the most recent one referred to as the Millennium Summit which occurred in 2018. Unfortunately, none of these organizations have provided equal and global access to quality education. Numerous agreements have been made with the goal to educate all children and ensure equal access to quality education. Unfortunately, these agreements have not been met and yet annual conventions are still being conducted and new agreements signed, but the goal is yet to be achieved (UNESCO, 2017).

The number of students leaving schooling without completing secondary education is quite alarming (Collins & Halverson, 2018). This has become a great concern for many countries of the world. Therefore, many countries are coming up with policies, strategies and interventions to enhance progression among its students and reduce the number of school dropouts (UNESCO, 2018). At the early educational stages, the number of enrolled students is very high, but at the secondary education levels, dropouts increase and the end result is very few students completing their education in many countries (World Bank, 2018).

Due to the increased dropout rates many of the school going children drop out without acquiring the needed skills at even the basic levels of education (Collins & Halverson, 2018). Hsin and Ortega (2018), did a study in the US that indicated that 13% of children aged between 16 to 24 years dropped out of their secondary schools. Currently, these children are not enrolled in any educational institutions. The high dropout rates as high as 55% is proof that the educational institutions are not meeting the needs of the children nor providing for the good of the entire population in these schools (Partelow & Johnson, 2017). However, the numbers are much more encouraging in the Netherlands where the dropout rates are almost zero. The reason behind this is said to be the balancing and the stable socio-economic factors in the country (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2017).

There is a striking diversity when it comes to the provision of education globally (Shields, 2017), a fact that can highly influence the environment from which the student hails from making him/her to remain or drop out from school. A research done by Mutwol, Cheserek, Boit and Mining (2017), indicates that involvement of learners in secondary education is highly impacted by elements on socio-economic features. Some of the dynamics they itemized comprise the parents' level of income and poverty.

Countries with high school dropout rates are an indication that their education system is failing (Collins & Halverson, 2018). Young students that drop out of their secondary schools start their lives in the outside world without the basic skills they need to succeed in today's complex and

competitive world. Most of the jobs require one to have at least completed their secondary education and one cannot continue with their post-secondary education without the high school certificate (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017). Secondary school dropouts are more likely to be unemployed compared to students who have completed their secondary education (Rumberger, 2018).

According to Heneveld (2016), education is life requirement for all human beings since it is part and parcel of their day to day activities. This means that education is required by all human beings regardless of their gender and nationality. There is an international understanding that education is the beginning of fighting against poverty and improving the standard of people's life. It increases productivity to the world market (GoK, 2017). Importance of education is critical taking into consideration that globally one billion people cannot read or write and of the school going children who are supposed to be learning, 300 million are out of schools. Of the total number of people worldwide who cannot read or write, two thirds of them are women while 60% of the children who are not in school are girls (World Bank, 2018).

Dropping out of school is a big loss to the individual, community and the nation at large. It may occur at all levels of learning and has been a social problem over the world. A learner dropping out from school is of great concern for any government or society. Many policies and strategies have been developed by the Kenyan government to enhance smooth transition rate in school but there are still students who withdraw from school prematurely (Ananga, 2014).

According to Stearns and Glennie (2016), out-of-school employment, family responsibilities, disciplinary policies, conflicts with teachers and staff lead to school drop outs. Other studies addressing school drop outs are Fredricks, Filsecker and Lawson, (2016) on pupil engagement that guided much of the research on school drop outs. Rumberger (2018) on emotional behavior, individual pupil's background as well as family, community and school factors, Allensworth (2017) on low levels of attendance as a strong factor responsible for dropping out.

There is a growing need for improved education. In today's world, there are numerous indicators of the insufficiency in our education systems including narrowness of jobs, ignorance and the inability to cope with social and personal challenges (UNESCO, 2017). As our societies grow and become even more complex, there is a growing need for quality holistic education. This is the reason behind UNESCO (2017) sentiments that for any society to grow, survive, and maintain a proper balance there is need for the society to have quality education which will also help its people to enjoy life and be participants to their society's economic development.

As stipulated by the World Bank (2014), every child should have a chance to complete at least primary education where they should develop basic learning skills of reading, writing and arithmetic (3RS). The benefits of education are well established as it raises the quality of life,

health and productivity of work, increases individual access to paid employment and facilitates social and political participation (Ayot & Briggs, 2017).

Part 2 Section 6 of the children's Bill passed by the Kenyan parliament in 2001 indicates that every child has an entitlement to quality education which the government and the child's parents are expected to provide. This children Bill was instituted as a consequence of the need to domesticate the 1989 UNCRC, and other international conventions, Declarations and Treaties which seek to educate, protect and care for children in the world (GoK, 2017).

Dropping out of school has multiple and complex reasons. Factors influenced by specific countries' situations, educational development, unsafe overcrowding, school-based factors such as poorly equipped schools with inadequate trained teachers contribute to students' dropout (UNSECO, 2017). According to the Ministry of Education MoE (2017) there are constraints in attaining the goals of Education for All (EFA) to realize vision 2030. The completion rates in secondary schools are low due to the dropout of the students. Reports by the MoE reveal that irrespective of the well-known gains achieved through education access, dropouts are still being experienced in addition to the reducing rate of completion (MoEST, 2017).

The drop-outs of students and low completion rates may be as a result of diverse factors. According to Backman (2017) schools that have adequate resources are less likely to have high drop outs. Such schools are also likely to have better disciplined children and their students are likely to be better motivated to continue with their education. Adequate resources are also likely to enhance access and outcomes of the education provided in these schools especially because the students are available to be taught meaningful and relevant skills that will help them in their later life.

Nonhlanhla (2017) revealed that inadequate materials meant for impacting and acquiring knowledge and other study materials, the teacher's inability to complete the provided syllabus among other related factors contribute to dropout incidences by learners. The fiscal and non-physical materials which in totality enhance the learning and development of a learner influence dropout rate (Brown, 2007). The adequacy of resources is closely associated with high outputs in academic and holistic development of children during formative years. Adequacy is a term meaning resources have a possibility to make a child benefit optimally in both indoor and outdoor activities.

In a learning institution, resources include human, financial, material, time and socio-cultural (Takanishi, 2016). It may be seen that resources are essential in learning and development, therefore ensuring their management is vital to the children and the school. Kenya has been putting a lot of weight on the sufficiency of educational resources being offered to public schools. As a result of this, the Kenyan education sector has undergone major transformations in the last thirty years undertaken by special commissions and working parties

established by the government. Through these commissions, the government has sought to address challenges facing the education sector through a wide range of policy initiatives (Wycliffe & Christopher, 2009).

To see to it that sufficiency of resources in public education, the Kenyan government began providing textbooks in schools immediately after independence as one measure of supporting children from poor families under the School Equipment Scheme (Chakava, 1996). Increased enrolment in subsequent years constrained the government's ability to fully meet the needs of schools and learners. Apart from textbooks, state of facilities and unavailability of sanitary towels can affect girls dropout.

The data obtained from County Education Officer, Kikuyu Sub County between year 2016 and 2019 shows that a total of 3,023 students enrolled in form one in 2016 and four years later those who registered for Kenya Certificate of Secondary Examination in 2019 were 2,884 students. A total of 139 students did not graduate accounting to 4.6% of the students who either dropped out or repeated. Therefore, there was a need to carry out a study on the school resources influence on learners' dropout.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Throughout the country, there have been increased enrollment rates in schools due to subsidized secondary education fee. The government of Kenya (GoK), with the support of donor agencies, Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other collaborative partners, have strived to enhance the participation and access in education. The GOK has even set up policies and interventions to prevent students' dropout (UNESCO, 2017). Although there are practices and policies in place to ensure successful completion of education by students, there is observed high number of students who continue to drop out before completion. According to data provided by MOE (2017), the drop out levels among the country's secondary going children in 2015 was at 8%. This means that a significant number of students who enroll for secondary education do not complete their education at this level. In Kenya, a few studies have been done on the determinants that lead to education drop out in secondary schools. Ndetta (2017) did an analysis on the school dropout rates among high school going children. The findings indicated that the dropout rates among these children was caused by different factors related to schools, families, peers, communities and personal. Tonjira (2018) investigated the effect socio-cultural factors had on drop out rates among high school going girls in Igembe North; Meru County, Obunga (2018) study revealed factors leading to drop out rates in Malanga zone-Siaya county in Kenya, Kiragu (2017) examined the factors leading to gender disparity in education in Kajiado county, specifically Girl-child school drop-out. The examined studies looked into the social - economic factors influencing school drop-out. The researcher acknowledges that limited studies have been conducted to assess the influence of school resources on drop-out specifically in Kiambu County. Kiambu County is characterized by high secondary school dropout rates like any other part in the

country and hence the need to examine the influence of school resources on learners' drop-out. This exploration pursued to seal the acquaintance gap through the assessment of the impact of school resources on learners dropout in public secondary institutions in Kikuyu Sub-County.

### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of this exploration was to evaluate the influence of school resources on students' dropout rate in public secondary institutions in Kikuyu Sub-County, to have solutions that can reduce the problem.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The objective of this study was to establish the influence of school resources on students' dropout rate in secondary institutions in Kikuyu Sub-County.

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Education function theory advanced by Mace (1979) was the foundation under which the current exploration was grounded on. The functionalist theory of education focuses on how education serves the needs of society through the development of skills, encouraging social cohesion and sorting of students. According to functionalists, the role of schools is to prepare students for participation in the institutions of society.

The theory observes education as a normal process which involves the conversion of inputs to outputs. It is an industry by which the learners become the inputs and are converted to complete products. The function consequently depicts the interaction amid variables. The variables can be school resources, school policies and practices, principal's leadership style level and students' discrimination by teachers which are some of the school based factors influencing pupils' wastage.

Without school resources it is indeed very difficult to create a child friendly environment hence this can result in students dropping out of institutions. When the variables in this function interact well with the students' in the teaching/learning environment, students are able to complete certain level of education having acquired certain level of knowledge and skills. This study on school based aspects prompting scholars drop-out rate in secondary institutions in Kikuyu Sub-County to help come up with ways of curbing the drop-out in the institutions.

### **EMPIRICAL REVIEW**

Teachers as human resources in the institutions assume a noteworthy job on understudies' fulfillment rate in institutions. As the human resource in the learning institutions, their role in the

institutions is crucial. The increased numbers of learners in these schools have not been matched with well prepared and enough educators in the schools. Government freezing of new recruitment of teachers remains (Francis, 2018). This makes the proportion between teacher and students worse.

A study carried out in South Africa established that supply of adequate human resources; teachers, parents and relevant education policymakers, play equipment, financial resources and enough time allocation to school activities is important to learning. Children of grades four to seven who also came from families with access to these resources, performed better than their counterparts in science and mathematics activity areas. It is important to observe that reviewed literature show Sub-Saharan African countries as those nations with increasing poverty and international debt (Case & Ardington, 2016).

Other factors that negatively impact on the retention rates of learners and the holistic education of students include the poor earnings paid to teachers and the absence of proper accommodation for teachers (Thomas, 2017). The continuation of the freezing of the teachers' employment negatively affects the quality of education considering that the enrollment of learners continue to rise although legislators have provided the piecemeal enrollment of educators, this is not a satisfactorily move that can meet the deficiencies felt in both primary and tertiary educational institutions (Partelow & Johnson, 2017).

Okemwa (2018) points out that the lack of proper sanitary facilities and toilets in educational institutions negatively impacts the retention rates among girls in schools due to their menstruation cycles. Such students are forced to stay at home until their cycle ceases. For most schools, there are no separate toilets for girls and boys which is discouraging for girls especially those already experiencing their monthly cycles (Okemwa, 2018).

The provided sanitary facilities are often dirty which can be a health hazard for these girls. Additionally, their lack of privacy leads to increased dropout rates among their children. Girls are also subjected to sexual harassment when they are visiting or after visiting the toilet (Lloyd & Hewett, 2019). As explained by Huisman, Rani and Smits (2017), schools should have separate toilets for girls and boys to address the safety issue among the girls' students in schools.

Mwikali (2015) assessed the determinants of secondary school dropout rate in Gilgil division of Naivasha district. The questionnaire was used as a research instrument for each selected participant in the study. The selected study design was a descriptive research design. The major findings of the study as the determinants of secondary school dropout rate were lack of adequate school resources. The essential school resources that lacked in the schools included clean toilets and adequate classrooms.

There is considerable debate in the research community about the extent to which school resources contribute to school effectiveness (Rumberger & Thomas, 2016). Several studies suggest that resources influence school dropout rates. Two studies found that the pupil/teacher ratio had a positive and significant effect on high school dropout rates even after controlling for a host of individual and contextual factors that might also influence dropout rates. One of those studies found that the higher the quality of the teachers as perceived by students, the lower the dropout rate, while the higher the quality of teachers as perceived by the principal, the higher the dropout rate (Rumberger & Thomas, 2016).

Factors within schools, for example, practices and schooling relations determine whether a student drops out of secondary school (Papalia, 2015). If teachers are not effective, then students might drop out of school. Teachers' effectiveness is influenced by teachers' quality and academic performance, teaching load, availability of basic facilities and resource and teacher pupil ratio (Sifuna, 2014). He also stated that unconducive school environment ejects students out of school, namely poor performance, repetition, corporal punishment, uncompromising teaching staff and lack of facilities can cause school dropout.

Student-teacher ratios were significant predictors of dropout rates. According to McNeal (2014) larger student-teacher ratios may increase a student's likelihood of dropping out by decreasing the number of interactions between pupils and teachers. Schools with larger ratios may make it difficult for at-risk pupils to seek help. McNeal (2014) found that the student/teacher ratio at a school significantly affects a student's likelihood of dropping out.

According to World Bank (2015), school structure, curriculum and size are factors influential to the increased likelihood of a student experiencing academic risk factors. The school curriculum has been found to affect the likelihood of a student to drop out regardless of which courses the individual was taking. Students who attended schools that offered Calculus or fewer courses below the level of Algebra 1 had a reduced risk of dropping out of school by 56%.

Similarly, World Bank (2014) points out that Principals, teachers, and parent committees have not been sufficiently trained to fulfill their pedagogical, management, and leadership roles, and data are not effectively utilized for decision-making. Countries are now focusing on these shortcomings, including in El Salvador, where teacher training as part of the full-time schooling model will be rigorously evaluated, and in Mexico, where an evaluation of management training for school principals is also underway. Ackers (2016) provide a comprehensive overview of how teacher recruitment, training, and incentive policies fail to maximize teacher performance across Latin America.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

A descriptive survey design was embraced in conducting the study. This research design uses information that describes the existing subject matter by asking participants about their attitudes, perceptions, values and behaviors towards the phenomenon under study (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2012). This design was used for this research due to the large population under study and because it was difficult to observe each respondent individually. The design allows for the use of questionnaires or interview questions to draw reliable data from the population under study (Orodho, 2017). The researcher chose to use this design since it allowed for the gathering and analysis of data from the respondents without being biased or manipulating the research variables (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2012).

### **Study Location**

The exploration was executed in Kikuyu sub-county, Kiambu County. The location is selected since Kiambu County has been experiencing learners' withdrawal in secondary institutions, particularly in Kikuyu sub-county according to the sub-county education office.

### **Target Population**

The target population consisted of 28 principals and 427 teachers and 10400 learners of public secondary institutions in Kikuyu Sub-County (Kikuyu Education Office, 2017).

### **Sample and Sampling Techniques**

To determine the sample size the researcher adapted the recommendation of 10 to 30% of the universe which is seen as representative and can be generalized to the population Mugenda & Mugenda (2012). The researcher used a lower limit of 10% of the population. The sample therefore comprised of the three principals of the sampled institutions which is 10 percent of the 28 institutions, 43 teachers which is 10 percent of the total population of 427 teachers and 1040 students which is 10% of the total population of 10400 students.

### **Sampling Techniques**

Stratified sampling identified the sample institutions since it was best suited to ensure the inclusion of all population subgroups. The institutions were grouped into three strata depending on whether they are day or boarding institutions, that is, mixed day institutions and girl's boarding institutions or boy's boarding institutions. Proportional allocation of teachers and principals using 10 percent per school category was used to select students, teachers and principals from each secondary school in the area. Proportional allocation of the respondents was

done to ensure that equal number of the respondents were drawn from each school as opined by Waksberg (2008). This also enabled an equal representation among the schools sampled.

### **Research Instruments**

Raw data was collected from the participants with the help of pre-determined questionnaires and interviews. Both open and closed queries helped in the collection of raw data as Creswell (2019) explains, data collection methods used for the collection of raw data include semi-structured and structured questionnaires, structured and semi-structured interviews.

### **Data Analysis and Presentation**

The quantitative data was coded and later keyed in into Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 20). The data was later analyzed using descriptive statistics namely; percentages and frequencies, mean and standard deviation. The findings obtained were presented in graphs, pie charts and bar charts. These presentation methods were used as they were easy to interpret and understand for the users (Orodho, 2017). Qualitative data was analysed thematically. This was done by first categorizing and discussing responses for each item according to themes. The data was edited, coded and reported using descriptive narrative of the views, experiences and opinions of the respondents. Content analysis was used for qualitative data analysis and presentation was done in prose form.

## **RESEARCH RESULTS**

The questionnaire helped collect raw data for this objective from the students and the interview was used to gather facts from the teachers and principals about the influence of school resources on students' drop-out. Students were requested to rate the subsequent attributes on the influence of school resources on students drop-out rate on a scale where 1 represented strongly disagree, 2 represented disagree, 3 represented undecided or neutral, 4 represented agree and 5 represented strongly agree. Their responses are presented in Table 1 where the frequencies, percentages mean and standard deviations of the responses are presented.

Table 1 shows that majority of the learners (62.3%) were in agreement with the view that schools with adequate resources reduce the dropout rates of the learners as supported by a mean of 4.30, schools with limited learning facilities discourage students from attending such schools as indicated by 56.8% and supported by a mean of 4.18, students in schools with few non-teaching staff easily drop out due to the extra duties that they are given in the school as indicated by 61.3% of the learners and supported by a mean of 4.09.

**Table 1 : Influence of School Resources on Drop-out**

<b>Statements</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>UD</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. D</b>
Deteriorating student/teacher ratios	12 (1.5%)	40 (5.0%)	105 (13.1%)	439 (54.7%)	207 (25.8%)	3.98	0.182
Limited learning facilities	6 (0.7%)	17 (2.1%)	62 (7.7%)	456 (56.8%)	262 (32.6%)	4.18	0.219
Few non-teaching staff	5 (0.6%)	23 (2.9%)	73 (9.1%)	492 (61.3%)	210 (26.2%)	4.09	0.200
Adequate resources	1 (0.1%)	4 (0.5%)	23 (2.9%)	500 (62.3%)	275 (34.2%)	4.30	0.244
Inadequate/ poor sanitary and toilet facilities	14 (1.7%)	48 (6.0%)	147 (18.3%)	427 (53.2%)	167 (20.8%)	3.85	0.168
N	803						

The findings show that deteriorating student/teacher ratios are part of the problems relating to the accomplishment of quality secondary education prompting lower scholastic and culmination rates among learners as indicated by 54.7% of the learners and supported by a mean of 3.98 and that inadequate and poor sanitary and toilet facilities affect retention of students in schools as indicated by 53.2% of the learners and supported by a mean of 3.85. This study is consistent with that of Thomas, (2017) who established that declining student/teacher ratios continue to present encounters on the accomplishment of quality secondary education prompting lower scholastic and culmination rates among learners. Similar to the study findings, Okemwa, (2018) revealed that inadequate and poor quality of sanitary facilities in the schools are a health hazard and also discourage girl students from attending schools. In some instances, the loss of dignity and privacy to these girls due to such facilities prompt them to drop out of school.

On how else school resources influence students drop-out, the students stated that school facilities make learning smooth and enjoyable. Lack of resources transfers the burden to the parents who are then required to chip in and provide some of the resources. Due to poverty levels, parents may be unable to provide the required resources which results in school dropout.

From the interviews, the study wanted to deduce if there are enough resources in the schools. The teachers stated that passing and acquiring knowledge resources were not enough in the schools. The principals stated that lack of adequate resources in the institutions influence drop out. It makes passing and acquiring knowledge difficult and also passes some cost to the parents who are not always in a position to provide some of the requirements. This leads to drop out in the long run for some students.

Consistently, in a study by Mwikali (2015) on the assessment of the determinants of secondary school dropout rate in Gilgil it was found that the determinants of secondary school dropout rate

were lack of adequate school resources. The essential school resources that lacked in the schools included clean toilets, and adequate classrooms similar to the study findings. The findings also concur to that of McNeal (2014) who established that larger student-teacher ratios may increase a student's likelihood of dropping out by decreasing the number of interactions between learners and teachers.

The study sought to find out other reasons that lead to school drop-outs. The Principals and teachers stated several other reasons for school dropout including; indiscipline, the quality of the teacher-student relationship, poor academic performance, pregnancy and parenthood and poverty that leads to a student dropping out in search of jobs.

## **CONCLUSION**

Founded on the discoveries, the subsequent conclusions were arrived at centered on the exploration objectives; Exploration concluded that passing and acquiring knowledge resources were not enough in the institutions which negatively influenced drop out. Schools with limited learning facilities discourage students from attending such schools. This makes passing and acquiring knowledge difficult and also passes some cost to the parents who are not always in a position to provide some of the required resources due to poverty.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

There is a need for the provision of adequate resources to reduce the burden passed to the parents. The ministry of education and the government ought to employ more teachers to improve on the teacher students' ratio for better academic achievements. This will discourage students drop-out.

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