

CAUSES OF SCHOOL DROPOUT AMONG PUPILS IN
SELECTED PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS
OF MULALA LOCATION, NZAUI DISTRICT
KENYA

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A RESEARCH REPORT PRESENTED TO THE INSTITUTE OF OPEN
AND DISTANCE LEARNING IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF BACHELORS DEGREE
IN PRIMARY EDUCATION OF KAMPALA
INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

NOVEMBER 2010

DECLARATION

I Kilo Mulei Mark, declare that this project is my original work and has never been presented to any other certificate or anything similar to such. I solemnly bear and stand to correct any inconsistency.

Signature. Kilo.....

Date. 20/8/2010.....

KIJ O MULEI MARK

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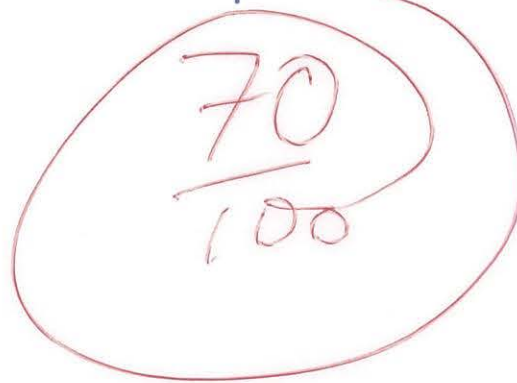
APPROVAL

This report resulting from researcher's effort on **causes of school dropout among pupils in selected primary and secondary schools of Mulala Location, Nzau District Kenya** was conducted under my supervision with my approval. It is now ready for submission to the academic board ready for submission to the academic boards for the award of a bachelor's degree in primary education with arts of Kampala International University.

Signed 

Date 19/8/10

MRS. NAMUSISI JUSTINE
SUPERVISOR



DEDICATION

I dedicate this piece of work to my family members, relatives and friends who tirelessly supported me in prayers, encouragement and more so financially. They contributed a lot all the time throughout this study.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

First and foremost I give thanks to almighty God for his Mercy and grace granted to me during this time of my degree course and through this research project.

I would like to thank my supervisor Mrs. Namusisi Justine for being there for me whenever I needed her and also offering her professional advice whenever necessary.

I would also thank my family members, friends and relatives for encouragement and support they rendered to me.

I would also like to thank my head teacher and rest of the staff for their support and prayers towards the success of my course.

I would like to thank the respondents who returned the questionnaire and those who are cooperative to me.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated causes of school dropout among pupils in selected primary schools, a case study of Mulala location, Nzau district Kenya with the purpose of finding out the causes of school dropout among pupils in selected primary schools of Mulala location. The place where this research was carried out was Mulala Location, Nzau district in Kenya. The population studied was 80 pupils in ten primary schools. A simplified questionnaire was designed for the pupils to fill in. findings showed that responses show that 62% of the respondents strongly agreed cultural beliefs and practices contribute to school dropout, 63% of the respondents strongly agreed that family set up affects learners performance, 44% of their respondents strongly agreed to the response that peer pressure leads to school drop out and 50% of the respondents strongly agreed that government policy on education affects learners performance. Recommendations were also made like the government came up with policies of proving employment in order to reduce poverty levels in the country, parents and other stakeholders in education ought to do away with traditional rites and customs such as early marriage, female genital mutilation, discrimination against the girl child in order to reduce. If not avoid school dropout and guidance and counseling session should be carried.

ACRONYMS

MOE	Ministry of Education
HIV/AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
SAL	Arid and Semi-Arid Lands
EFA	Education for all
WEF	World Education Forum
UN	United Nations
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
EYC	Elimu Yetu Coalition
FGM	Female Genital mutilation

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.0 Introduction

Education is a very important resource which any country whether developed or developing need to embrace in order to be able to match towards the path of self sufficiency. It is viewed as the only solution to poverty eradication. In order to stress on the importance of education, the United Nations through its member states set one of its goals as provision of basic education to every child. Each party is encouraged on the need to offer free primary education and possibly secondary education to every citizen as a milestone to illiteracy and poverty eradication.

Kenya as one of the core signatories to this convention has gone a step ahead to implementing free primary education since 2003 and cutting down the cost of secondary school education by partly sponsoring the on some expenses. This is an initiative to ensure access of education to every Kenyan in the long run curbing the high illiteracy levels in many parts of the country. Education sector is one of the key drivers of the Kenyan economy with education providing skilled manpower to work in production, service and manufacturing industries.

Every aspect of development requires specialized skilled personnel. In order to ensure this the ministry of education has come up with a curriculum for primary and secondary education. The ministry of science and technology, which gives charter to both private and public universities, ensure that the degree courses offered by these institutions are of relevance to growth of the Kenyan economy. Despite the fact that

the government is encouraging every citizen to access education. Its facing a number challenges, the worst of them being premature school dropout. A number of reasons have been associated with school dropout. Poverty is one such a factor. Many Kenyan families survive on less than a dollar a day. Children from such families lack school uniform, regular meals regardless whether balanced or not and other necessities of life. Such children begin to show irregular school attendance, poor learner involvement, and general poor academic performance of learners eventually culminating in school dropout.

Despite the fact that government is investing a lot of resources in offering free primary education in all parts of Kenya including Mulala Division of Nzau district in Eastern, it seems uniformed about the regular school dropouts among school going pupils both in primary and secondary schools. There is thus need to carryout research in order to establish the factors that lead to school dropouts. The result will be useful in advising the government to implement policies which will sort out the underlying causes of premature school dropout.

Despite all the signs of rising educated unemployment and the relative devaluation of occupational positions in most of Africa, as in other developing regions, schooling remains the only route of upward mobility for the lower classes. Because they are unable or more inappropriately unwilling to affect a more straight forward design for the redistribution of national wealth, policy makers in most developing countries increasingly prescribe schooling. As a result, the masses clamor fort and governments respond by allowing substantial positions of there recurrent budgets to it. These figures do not reflect private costs of education, consisting of direct costs to parents as well as income forgone by pupils. But despite rather heavy public and private outlays on formal education, the majority of third world children and their parents the dream of upward mobility

through education seems to end only in failure or disappointed hopes. This is because many children end up dropping out of school. The research is thus out to investigate the factors that contribute to this premature dropout despite the government investing so much in the education docket.

1.1 Geographical position of mulala location

Mulala location is located in the eastern province of Kenya and covers an area of 1,360 Kilometers square. It lies in the newly created south Eastern sub province. The area is lowland and bordered by Mbitini, Kasikeu and Nguu divisions.

Mulala location is majorly inhabited by the Kamba Community. A mixture of other Kenya tribes has come to the area to offer technical and professional services such as businessmen, teachers, religious leaders and administrators. The zone is facilitated with 20 public primary schools and relatively low number of teachers. The major economic activity in Mulala location is subsistence farming, herding and sand harvesting. The population is largely illiterate and lowly qualified with a few technical skills. Incomes of the people of Mulala area are low, actually below the poverty line due to the subsistent nature of their economy. Due to the biting poverty and illiteracy levels in the area, learners quite often opt to absent themselves from school or even dropout of school to join the sand harvesting and other piece jobs to survive.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Despite of the fact that government invested a lot of resources in offering free education to all school going age, some children are still missing

from classrooms for reasons. Schooling remains the only route of upward mobility for the lower classes, and here we are with large number of children failing to complete the eight years of basic education. A good education is the only means of breaking the cycle of poverty for poor children. If this problem is not addressed the society will be deprived of future generation decision makers. This study was therefore carried to investigate this problem.

Every financial year, the government of Kenya allocates the highest amount of its resources to the ministry of education. This is because the government recognize the real benefits of an educated population. Despite the fact that education continues to meet a lot of success in Kenya, previous studies seem not to have exhausted on the challenges that affect its success. Among the challenges ins premature school drop out mainly by pupils in primary schools. Its therefore necessary that research on this aspect be carried out in Mulala location. This is because it being one of the most struck areas in the larger NZaui district, it will serve as unbiased sample of study. The findings of this research work will be useful to the government and other policy makers in managing the problem so as to purposefully maximize the resource pumped into education sector.

1.3 Objectives

1.3.1 Main objective

The main objective of this study was to investigated the causes of school dropout among learners in selected primary schools in Mulala location, Nzau district Kenya.

1.3.2 Specific objectives

- To establish whether poverty contributes to school dropouts
- To investigate how the environmental factors have influenced school dropout
- To find out how culture and gender have contributed to school dropout

1.4 Research questions

Is there a relationship between poverty and school dropouts?

How have cultural beliefs and traditions affected learner sustenance in schools?

How have the environment factors influenced school dropout?

1.5 Limitation of the study

The time allocated for data collection might be too short given the magnitude of the research. The researcher had to work very long hours, including weekends. Some appointments with respondents were not honored, forcing the researcher to make alternative arrangements. Some of these were during weekends because they claimed to be free then. This happened especially at boarding schools.

There were also cases of uncooperative and difficult respondents. Some school respondents misunderstood the purpose of the study, thinking it was an investigation.

While conducting research at one institution, the researchers discovered that another UN body was collecting data on a related study. In two cases, the researcher had to reschedule his study sites.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter reviews literature as an account of the knowledge and ideas that have been established and accredited by scholars and experts in the field of study. It is guided by the objectives of the study outlined in chapter one.

Education and millennium development (MDG) goals

As a nation, Kenya hopes to achieve education for all (EFA) by the year 2015. This is an uphill task given the various challenges in the education. The year 2015 is also significant globally because it is the target year for the fulfillment of the eight millennium goals. Kenya looks forward to have her people achieve the millennium goals.

Kenya looks forward to have her people achieve the millennium goals together with other people worldwide. The pivotal hinge for these important target goals is education levels of the people involved and look forward to benefit from the fruits of EFA, millennium goals and industrialization. For such matters therefore, Kenya is trying her best to have her people education. The Kenyan secondary school education cycle is important because it de-links one from elementary (primary) learning, provides a chance for one to complete the cycle for basic education and anchors as the springboard to either tertiary or higher learning. However, pandemic primary and secondary school dropout in Kenya is alarming. For instance, in a period of ten years, 1992-2002, every secondary school cohort suffered not less than ten percent school dropout for example the highest dropout rate for the girls was 50% in the

1997-2000 cohort. The average dropout and completion rates for girls in the period under consideration were 20% and 80% respectively. For the boys they were 14% and 87% respectively. Some of the reasons that lead to the pandemic primary school dropouts include poverty, early pregnancies/marriages, HIV/AIDS, drug abuse and low self esteem. Importantly every school dropout in Kenya signifies unfulfilled objectives, goal and aim for the individual as well as for the community at large.

Culture, gender and school dropout

The Kenyan education authorities and non governmental organizations (NGOs) are becoming more aware of the need address unequal access, high dropout rates and poor quality of education for girls. However, Kenya has missed part of the Millennium development goal 3 targets; elimination of Gender disparities in education by 2005, research undertaken by the Elimu Yetu coalition (EYC), identified that social and cultural pressures force Kenyan school girls to under achieve or drop out of school. For many girls, education is ended by marriage and pregnancy. In rural areas fathers often marry their young daughters to older wealthy men to fetch a good dowry. Many girls who become pregnant then dropout of school and seek marriage. Stigma, abuse from teachers and other pupils and lack of child facilities prevent teenage mothers from returning to school.

Female genital mutilation (FGM) widely practices by the Maasai and other communities causes girls to withdraw early from school. Girls are now circumcised at a younger age, and their subsequent adult behavior includes sexual activity and lack of interest in schooling. Many parents attach little value to girls education. Some believe that educating a girl simply enriches her husband's family, while educating a boy is seen as enriched his own family. A girl who has received tooo much may either not get a suitable husband or cause difficulties in marriage leading to

divorce. The unequal gender division of labour in households is an added pressure. As the number of AIDS deaths and child headed households continues rising, the burden of caring for family members primarily falls on girls. In most developing countries, girls do not receive the same educational opportunities as boys. Even when given the opportunity to be educated, the girls typically face formidable barriers to the completion of their studies. For example, while virtually all girls in Kenya are initially enrolled in primary school, approximately 65% of them dropout before completing standard 8 (Forum for African Women educationalist). Many of the barriers that girls face in striving to stay in school are either directly or indirectly related to reproductive health, sexual behavior, and maturation. Some of the causes of school dropout in Kenya include early marriage, pregnancy, lack of gender appropriate facilities in schools (such as latrines), low self esteem, lack of money, harassment by male teachers and fellow students, and the low value placed on the education of girls by their parents and society in general.

In general, research has shown that many girls lack money to buy sanitary wear and stay away from school during menstrual periods.

School are often pressured for sexual favors by teachers and male pupils. Availability of pornographic films, drags and beer in urban environment causes girls to be harassed on their way to and from school.

The practice of forcing under performing pupils to repeat a school year particularly effects girls, exposing to ridicule which can force them to abandon education; Teachers have low expectations of girls.

School influences on dropout

Corporal punishment is a universal vice which occur in all social settings regardless of the gender or social, economic or intellectual status of those it affects. Research indicates that corporal punishment is a means by which adults gain control over children.

Corporal punishment meted out to children assumes physical and humiliating punishments that are considered in this study as forms of violence. Physical violence may take the form of hitting, beating, slapping or kicking. Humiliating violence may be by way of threats, neglect or denial of basic necessities or verbal abuse. Physical and humiliating punishments is the use of physical force or degrading treatment causing some degree of pain or discomfort with the aim of correcting, controlling or changing behavior or educating or bring up the child. Physical punishment can take many forms of hitting the child; kicking, slapping or throwing the child, pinching or pulling the hair, and canning or whipping. Humiliating punishment comes in a variety of forms including humiliating; threats, neglect, degrading or demeaning treatment, and subject the child to ridicule (Save the children, 2003).

In December 2004 the ANPPCAN commissioned a study on corporal punishment in Kenya whose research began in January 2005 and its findings will form part of a UN study on corporal punishment.

The study reveals that these forms of violence are still deploying in officers, teachers and adults in general. Older children sometimes beat younger children, especially where bullying goes unchecked. Children exposed to such treatment end up dropping out of school for fear of their lives safety.

Political conflicts in the environment and school dropout

For education to serve its real purpose the political stand of the country must be stable. When there is political instability school children suffer. They are forced to dropout of school for security purposes. For instance in 2008 when Kenya suffered Post Election violence many children were forced to live in camps with their parents. Schools were burnt down and

many people internally displaced. Children dropped out of school for lack of security.

Drug abuse and substance abuse in the environment and school dropout

The value system of modern society has drastically over the years. Children today grow up in an environment that promotes impulsive desires fed to them by the media or peer influence. Today's liberal society has allowed media channels to put greater emphasis on indulgence through drugs and other substances that are detrimental to the life of a child. It is evident that school children who indulge themselves of drugs and poor academic performance.

Poverty and school dropout

In a number of communities around the world, poverty is the largest contributory factor to violence. Poverty limits parents capacity to cater for the basic necessities of their children and hence increases the risk of violent behavior within the family. Children who live in subject poverty have to contend with painful experiences. They may suffer a lack of proper education, food, shelter and clothing among other things. One effect of this is to encourage the children to dropout of the school and indulge in theft, begging, and street life, prostitution, lying and robbery.

Most children come from very poor families. Most even go to school on empty stomachs. They even lack the basic necessities in life. Some of them are forced to dropout of school and look for piece of jobs. They are subjected to child labor and are poorly paid since they lack the necessary technical and professional skills to work. For instance, the standard newspaper reported on 1 April 2005 that Kenya has approximately 1.9 million children engaged in child labor. The children work mainly in

places such as coffee and tea plantations, quarries, mines and fishing grounds. Many also work as domestic helps.

Parent neglect and school dropout

Children need tender loving care and guidance that enables them to relate to adults and society as they develop into responsible members of the community. It is advisable for parents to create time for their children and establish personal relationships that promote proper discipline and provide emotional support. The failure of parents to provide a stable environment of mutual trust condemns children to moral decadence and unacceptable and deviant behavior. The children are influenced by uncouth behavior and finally dropout of school. Death of parents due to sickness or war leave them to the vagaries and whims of society leading to dropouts.

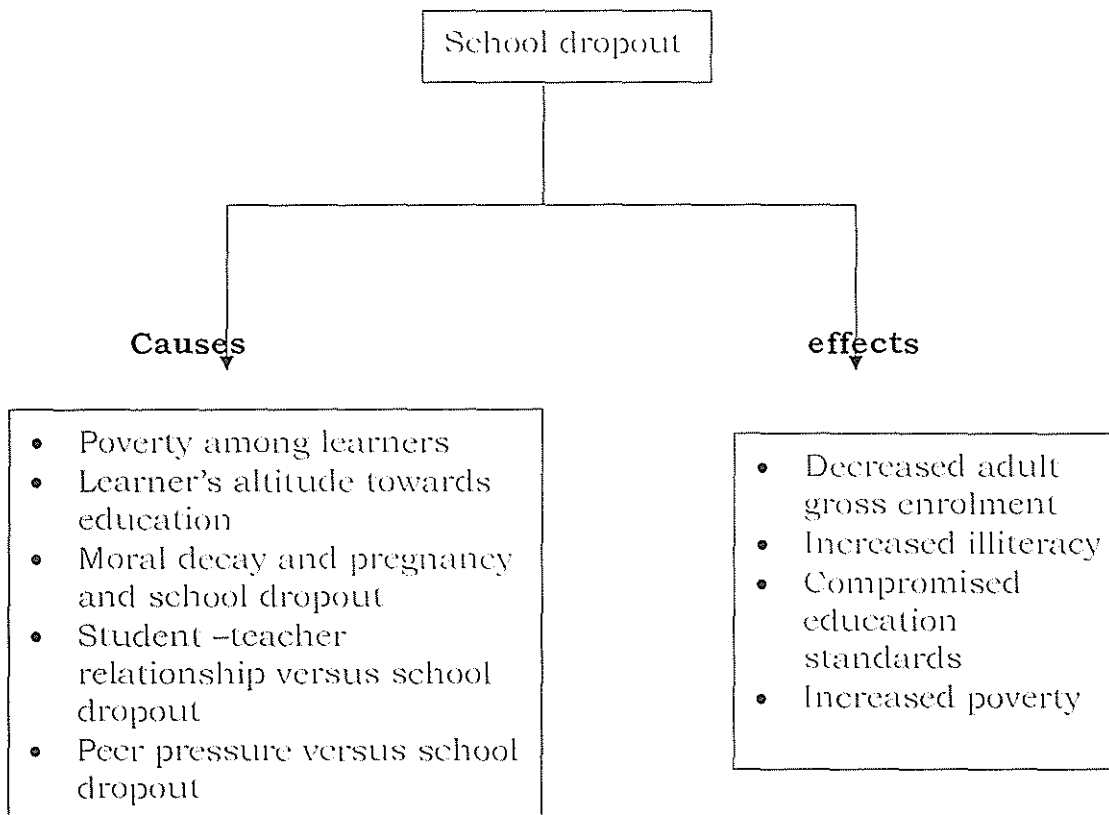
Truancy and exclusions

Truancy rates correlates with social class, and with unemployment among parents. Children excluded from school represent the group perhaps at greatest risk. Exclusion denies a child access to a full education, and has been shown to be the trigger for an escalating rate of crime and disaffection; while recent measures have increased the level of educational input provided to exclude children, the correlation remains strong. Rates of permanent exclusion rose during the 1990s, then dropped to 9,000 in 2000, but are now rising again. Whilst there is some correlation between exclusion rates and deprivation indicators of the local authorities, the variation between authorities is extremely high, and some deprived authorities have extremely low rates. Within schools, excluded pupils are more likely to come from poor homes. The key factors that influence exclusion rates appear to be the differing cultures, police and practices in schools.

Premarital sex in the children's environment and school dropout

The rapid expansion in education has led to an increasing association in the public mind between premarital sexual activity, childbearing, and school girl dropout. Because of the large number of school dropouts of all ages in Kenya and because reported dropouts due to pregnancy appear to represent only about 1% of girls currently enrolled in school each year, pregnancy is unlikely to be the leading proximately cause of girls leaving school early (Njau and Wamahiu, 1994). Although the assumption is often made that girls who are forced to withdraw because of pregnancy would have continue in school had they not become pregnant (Meekers and Ahmed, 1999) many other reasons may cause a girl to withdraw from school during her adolescence. The absence of social and economic opportunities for girls and women and demand placed on them, couple with the gender inequalities known to exist within the educational system (Mensch and Lloyd, 1998), may result in unsatisfactory school experiences, poor academic performance and resignation to or preference for early motherhood. Therefore, although pregnancy is often thought to disrupt the education of adolescent girls, teenage reproductive behavior may be endogenous to school completion in that many of the same factors lead to dropout and early childbearing (Lloyd and Mensch, 1999).

Conceptual framework



Source: Field data 2010

The key concern is school dropout among learners in selected primary schools in Mulala location, Nzaui district. According to the conceptual framework shown above, school dropout is caused by factors among; poverty, learner's attitude towards education, moral decay, and unwanted pregnancies among female learners, student teacher relationship and peer pressure among others. The effects of drop out include; a gross enrollment, increased illiteracy levels, compromised educational standards and increased poverty levels in the country.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter explains the methods that the researcher used to select the geographical areas from which the research was carried out and methods of selection of respondents. It also explains the methods used to collect process and analyze the data.

3.1 Research design

The conceptual structure within which research is conducted constitutes the blue print for the collection, measurement and analysis of data (Kothari, 1985). The research utilized an analytical research design because it involved facts or information already available to analyze data and make a critical evaluation of the material. Also qualitative research design was used in the study.

3.2 Population study

The population of interest comprised of the prayers in the education sectors for example teachers, parents, education officers and the local leaders. The research targets this population because these people have the first hand information concerning what is happening in the education sector right on the ground.

3.3 Sample

Simple random sampling was used to select members of the education sector, local and religious leaders. Twenty four teachers, eighteen

parents, five religious and local leaders and the zonal inspectors were interviewed. A total 50 interviewees formed the population sample.

3.4 Instruments

3.4.1 Questionnaires

The questionnaires took the form of structured. The questions were closed ended. Closed questions require the respondent to select answers. The response was then weight on scale as either strongly agree, agree, strongly disagree and disagree. The questions enabled the interviewer get the opinion of the interviewee without having to struggle commending on them.

3.4.2 Observation

This involved observation of trends of learner dropouts. This was evident through progression of class registers for a certain class right from class one to eight for primary schools and forms one to four in secondary schools. Young children of school going age were also observed loitering in the market centre of Mulala and Emali during school going.

3.5 Data collection

Data collection procedure involved both primary and secondary data. In primary data interviews, questionnaires supported by observation were incorporated. The questionnaires were pilot tested to test their reliability and validity and the results used to refine the questionnaire. The secondary data was collected from books and journals. Direct observation of the situation on the ground also formed the basis of data.

3.6 Data analysis

Before analysis data was stored in excel spread sheets. The data collected was summarized, classified, sorted, edited and compiled in form of graphs, charts and tables. The SPSS software was used to analyze the data in order to ensure reliability and unbiased results.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter captured the presentation, analysis and interpretation and discussion of findings. The results were presented in form of tables and frequency counts and percentage. It focused on the probable causes of school dropout among learners. This in turn influenced the academic performance of learners in Mulala location, Nzauzi district. Systematic analysis of the data was based on the responses of the respondents as per the questionnaires.

4.1 Introduction

Background information of the respondents

Table 1: Shows the profile of the respondents

Respondents	Frequency	Percentages
Gender		
Male	30	60
Female	20	40
Total	50	100
Age		
18-35 years	15	30
36-55 years	20	40
55 and above	15	30
Total	50	100
Level of education		
Primary	7	14
Secondary	12	24
Middle level college	21	42
University	10	20
Total	50	100

Source: Field data 2010

Fifty questionnaires were administered to parents, teachers and local/religious leaders in Mulala location, Nzau district. All the questionnaires were filled and returned by the respondents. The responses thus represent 100% of the total number of questionnaires administered. The study covered 50 randomly selected individuals who fell in the category of parents, teachers and local/religious leaders. The questionnaires also considered gender parity covering 60% females.

The age category of the respondents was divided into three groups covering the age brackets 18-35 which was 30%, 36-55 years were 40% and 55 years and above representing 30% of respondents. This is because the age bracket covers adults (18-55 years) who are mostly parents and of the working class. The level of education of the respondents fell into four categories which included primary, secondary, middle level college and university. 7(14%) of the respondents had the basic primary education, 12(24%) secondary school, 21(42%) college and the remaining 10 (20%) had acquired university education. The categories were selected in order to have diverse views across the academic class. All respondents in the three categories had an occupation ranging from casuals, blue and white collar jobs; majority had acquired middle level college above and above. This shows that at least each of them understood the fruits that go with education.

4.2 Poverty and school dropout

The social background of learners is thought to be a major factor in academic performance of learner (Mafabi, 1995). Poverty is an issue that more and more of our nation's children are coming face to face with. The price that children of poverty must pay is unbelievably high each year, increasing numbers of children are entering schools with needs from circumstances, such as poverty, that schools are not prepared to meet.

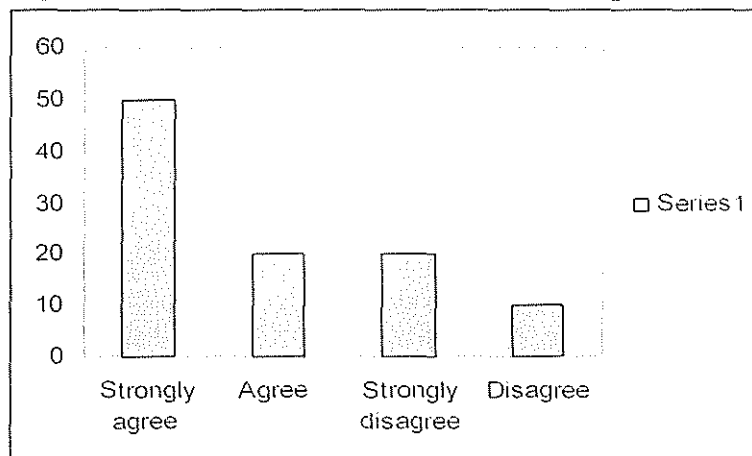
Low levels of investment by family and society in the education and development of disadvantaged children translate into poorer outcomes with others resulting to school dropout. The researcher sought to know if majority of the learners from poor families performed poorly in class compared to their counterparts from financially stable families and their responses were as shown below:

Table 2: Shows the concurrence of poverty and school dropout

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	25	50
Agree	10	20
Strongly disagree	10	20
Disagree	5	10
Total	50	100

Source: Field data 2010

Figure 1: Shows the concurrence of poverty and school dropout



Source: Field data 2010

The figure above shows that the respondents hold diverse views. Majority of the respondents comprising 50 strongly agreed with the response that poverty contributes to school dropouts. 20% agree, 2% strongly disagreed and 10% disagree. The researcher found out that poor pupils tend to miss out classes for lack of food, school uniforms and ill health among

other basic needs. Some even miss out classes to do casual work and other kinds of piece of jobs to look for basic necessities. Extreme cases terminate in school dropouts in order to fend for their needs and that of their young siblings. It has been established that first born children in their families more often dropout of school to fend for their family members.

4.3 Environmental influences on school dropout

Within the environment, there are quite a number of influences which impact the young children’s attitude towards education. Some of them end up dropping from school. The researcher therefore had to assess the learner’s attitude towards education.

Further still the researcher investigated how school environment has led to school dropout as well as how the environment has acted to push more children out of school.

4.3.1 Environmental influences on learner’s attitude towards education

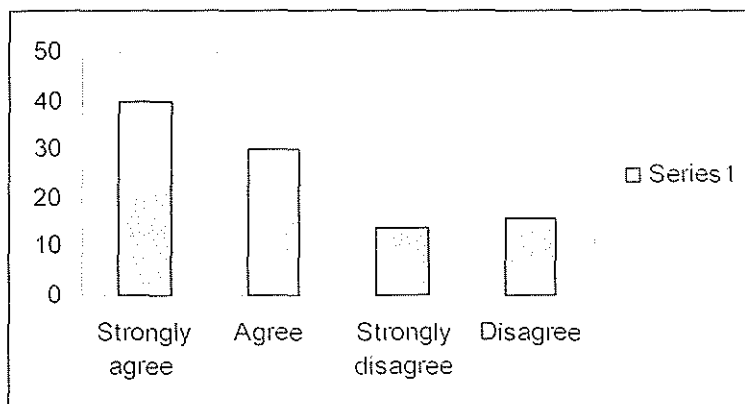
The researcher investigated the children’s attitude towards education

Table 3: shows environmental influence on learners attitude towards education

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	20	40
Agree	15	30
Strongly disagree	7	14
Disagree	8	16
Total	50	100

Source: Field data 2010

Figure 2: Shows environmental influence on learner's attitude towards education



Source: Field data 2010

Table and figure above indicate that 40% of the respondents strongly agreed that majority of learners have negative attitude towards schooling. 30% agreed while 14% strongly disagreed and 16% of the respondents disagreed. The 99/2002 cohort research shows that the average dropout for girls was 50%. This is translated as being caused by low self esteem among girls was in schools. This is majorly attributed to the negative attitude most communities have towards girl education. Some communities think that girls do not deserve formal education as their boy counterparts, a value that tends to lower girls esteem hence dropping out of school. Again, if a child grows up in an environment where education is not embraced then he/she will grow up with little value attached to school. At times parental neglect also causes emotional stresses among learners forcing them to dropout of school.

4.3.2 Early pregnancies as an environmental influence and school dropout

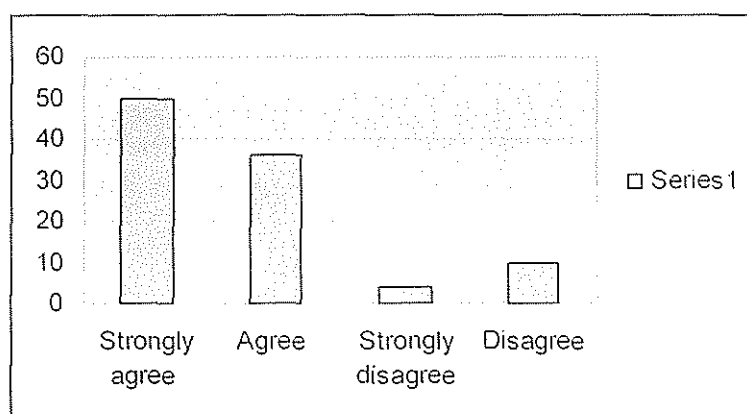
The researcher sought to establish whether some children have dropped from school due to early pregnancy.

Table 4: showing whether early pregnancies contributes to school dropout

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	25	50
Agree	18	36
Strongly disagree	2	4
Disagree	5	10
Total	50	100

Source: Field data 2010

Figure 3: Showing whether early pregnancies contributes to school dropout



Source: Field data 2010

The table and figure show that 50% of the respondents strongly agreed that family set up affects learners performance, 36% agreed, while 4% of the respondents strongly disagreed and 10% disagreed.

School girl pregnancy problem is mentioned in connection with girls who dropout of school, and in such cases, the assumption usually is made that pregnancy recedes and causes school leaving (Meekers et al, 1995). For many girls, education is ended by marriage and pregnancy. Many girls who become pregnant drop out of school and seek marriage. Stigma, abuse from teachers and other pupils and lack of child care facilities prevent teenage mothers from returning to school.

4.3.3 School environmental influence on school dropout

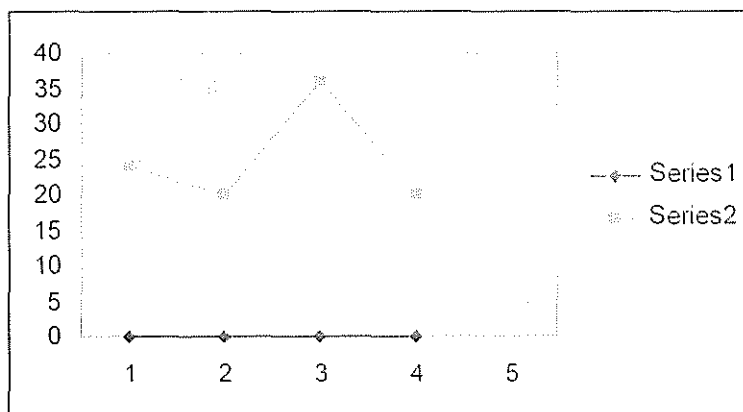
Under within the school, there are teachers, whose relationship greatly affects the child's stay in school. The teacher sought to find out whether the way teachers related with the pupils they taught affected the children's retention in school.

Table 5: showing school environmental influence on school dropout

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	12	24
Agree	10	20
Strongly disagree	18	36
Disagree	10	20
Total	50	100

Source: Field data 2010

Figure 4: Showing school environmental influence on school dropout



Source: Field data 2010

The figure above shows that 24% of the respondents strongly agreed that poor teacher learner relationship led to school dropout. 20% agreed, 36% strongly disagreed and 20% disagreed. In some cases school girls are

often pressured for sexual favors by teachers and male pupils. The practice of forcing under performing pupils to repeat a school year particularly affects girls, exposing them to ridicule which can force them to abandon education.

Further more, teachers have low expectations of girls, at times teachers met out corporal punishment to learners. This could involve beating, canning, kicking or pinching. This practice of instilling discipline could force learners to run out of school.

4.3.4 Peer pressure and learners school dropout

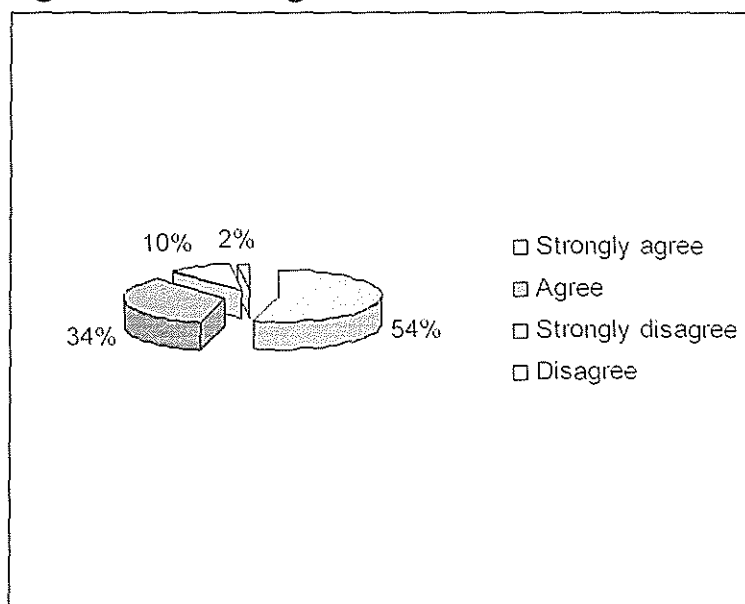
Further more within the environment, there are other children with whom other children interact with. These share ideas like ambitions as well as disliked. It was assumed that these pupils could greatly influence one another to either remain or leave school for fear of their lives and safety.

Table 6: Showing peer pressure and learners school dropout

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	27	54
Agree	17	34
Strongly disagree	5	10
Disagree	1	2
Total	50	100

Source: Field data 2010

Figure 5: Showing Peer Pressure and learner's school dropout



Source: Field data 2010

The figure above shows that 54% of the respondents strongly agreed to the response that peer pressure leads to school dropout. While 34% agreed, 0% strongly disagreed and the remaining 2% disagreed.

The researcher realized that a number of children with school going age just loiter around the area, engage in piece jobs like herding, tilling land for pay, growing vegetables along river banks for sale and hawking. Others play pool table games in the surrounding shopping centre where they meet with those who are at school. Such interaction influences the learners to pull out of school and engage in piece jobs.

4.4 Effects of culture on school dropout

Culture refers to values and beliefs that a certain individual or community hold dear to. Such beliefs could be superstitious or superhuman and lack scientific backing. They could also be discriminatory against certain categories for people in the community for

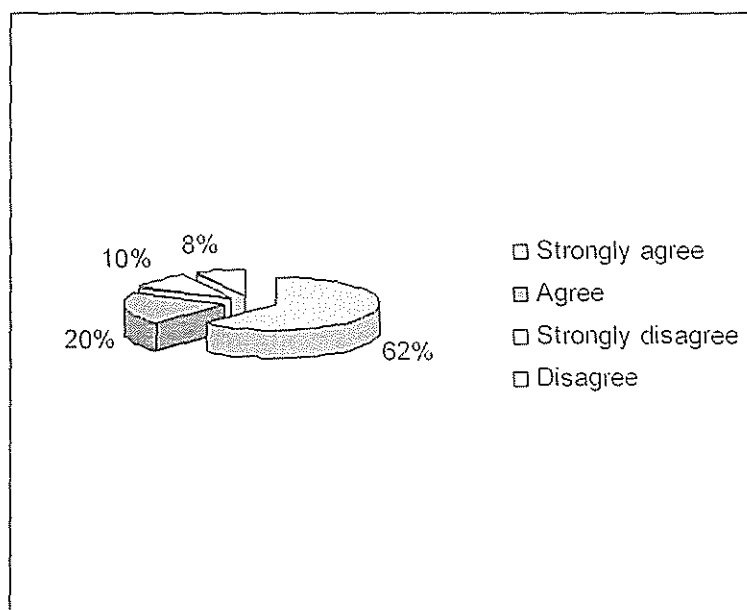
example Gender, age etc. In rural areas fathers marry their young daughters to older wealthy men to fetch a good dowry.

Table 7: Showing the response on whether cultural beliefs causes school dropout

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	31	62
Agree	10	20
Strongly disagree	5	10
Disagree	4	8
Total	50	100

Source: Field data 2010

Figure 6: Showing the response whether cultural beliefs causes school dropout



Source: Field data 2010

The responses show that 62% of the respondents strongly agreed cultural beliefs and practices contribute to school dropout, 15% agreed while 12% strongly disagreed and 10% of the respondents disagreed.

Female genital mutilation (FGM) widely practiced by the Masai and other communities causes girls to withdraw early from school. Girls are now circumcised at a younger age and other subsequent adult behavior includes sexual activity and a lack of interest in schooling. Many parents attach little value to girl's education. Some believe that educating a girl simply enriches her husband's family, while educating a boy is seen as enriching his own family; a girl who has received too much education may either not get a suitable husband or cause difficulties in marriage leading to divorce.

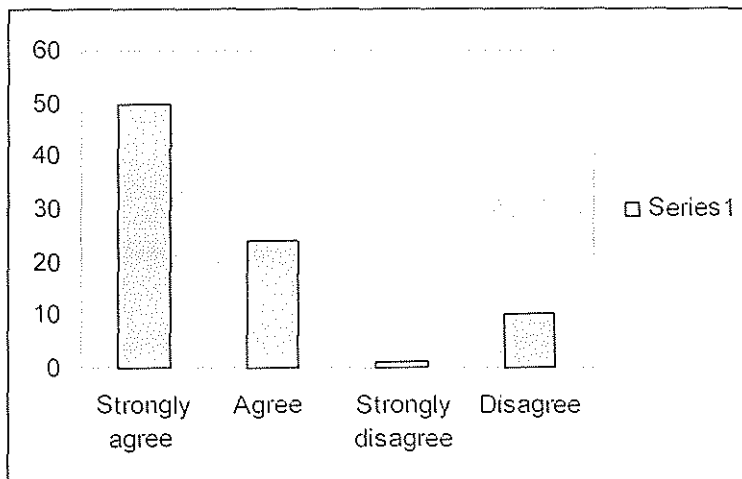
4.5 Government policy on education and school dropout

Table 8: Government policy on education and school dropout

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	25	50
Agree	12	24
Strongly disagree	8	1
Disagree	5	10
Total	50	100

Source: Field data 2010

Figure 7: Showing the influence of government policy on curbing school dropout



Source: Field data 2010

The findings shows that 50% of the respondents strongly agreed that government policy on education affects learners' performance, 24% agreed, while 16% of the respondents strongly disagreed and 10% were not sure.

According to the findings, most of the respondents agreed that the government policy on provision of free primary education was a good initiative to enable learners from poor family backgrounds to gain access to basic education. Others said that the government ought to totally abolish corporal punishment to learners and instead initiate guidance and counseling. While appreciating the provision of free primary education, other respondents suggested that the government introduces school feeding programme to help to retain learners in schools.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

The broad objective of the study was to investigate the causes of school dropout among learners in selected primary schools in Mulala location, Nzau district, Kenya. This chapter focuses on the discussion of the findings, conclusions and recommendations. The chapters also highlights areas not covered but are suitable topics for further research.

5.1 Summary of findings

In trying to summarize the project, it is of importance to review the objectives of the study. The first objective of the study was to establish the response as to whether poverty contributes to school dropout. Majority of the respondents strongly agreed that showed that most of the learners from poor families perform dismally in school and even go to extend of dropping out, they dropout to look for piece jobs and other means of fending for themselves and their families.

According to Judith Smith, Jeanne Brooke-Gunn, and Pamela Klebanov (1997), persistently poor children those who spend all of the childhood years in poverty experience more negative cognitive and educational outcomes than their peers who encountered only short-term or transient poverty.

5.1.1 Environmental influences on school dropout

Learner's attitude and school dropout

The largest percentage of the respondents strongly agreed that the attitude that learners have towards schooling and the learning environment influences school dropout. The cohort report of 199/2002 showed a 50% school dropout among girls. Other factors related to attitude that affect school drop out among learners include lack of mentorship among learners, parental neglect and general negative attitude towards girl education by both teachers, parents and the community at large.

Teacher-student relationship and school dropout

Students-Teacher relationship also influence learner sustenance in school. Some teachers have low expectation for girls which reduce their self esteem making them perform poorly. This could terminate in dropping out of school. Other teachers impose corporal punishment to learners and especially those who perform dismally in schools and this may lead them to dropout of school. Other teachers force those who perform poorly to repeat classes against their will and this could lead them to drop out of schools. Other male teachers pressurize girls for sex and if not granted they could settle scores by demoralizing such learners who may be stressed to the extent of dropping out of school.

Peer pressure and school dropout

Other learners are dragged into abandoning schooling by their colleagues who lure them with money earned through piece jobs or even the joy of being free from school work.

5.1.2 Culture and school dropout by gender

The study also sought to determine the impact of traditional customs and beliefs on school dropout. It was established that gender inequality

was a major stumbling block to girls wishing to attend schools. In some communities parents consider girls as wealth makers by denying them schooling and marrying them off to wealthy men to fetch high dowry. Discrimination of the girl child is another problem where parents prefer to educate the boy child at the expense of the girl child. Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a cultural rite which makes girls either run away from home to escape or even lose schooling interest after undergoing the rite.

When it comes to gender issues girls are more likely to dropout of school than boys owing to increasing cases of early unwanted pregnancies. Girls tend to mature earlier than boys and this exposes them to a risk of being lured into unprotected sex by rogue teachers and other male counterparts. If a female learner gets pregnant, she stops schooling for fear of shame, stigma and abuse. Even after delivery they may want to go back to school but are unable to get the chance for fear of being branded a harlot and bad example to other female learners, and if such a chance comes they may lack child care facilities.

Lastly the government is trying to sustain learners in school fees. Most respondents appealed to the government to provide food completely abolish corporal punishment and encourage guidance and counseling in order to retain a large number of learners who survive and go through the entire system of education.

5.2 Conclusion

The main purpose of the study was to investigate the causes of school dropout among learners in selected primary and secondary schools in Mulala location, Nzau district, Kenya. The research project was a success because the researcher managed to come up with the causes of

school dropout. It was established that school dropout is caused by one or combination of the following; poverty, learners poor attitudes towards education, culture and tradition, poor teacher-learner relationship, peer pressure and insufficiencies in government policy to retain learners in schools.

5.3 Recommendations

Learners should be trained for guidance and counseling sessions by their parents, teacher, local and religious leaders in order to assure them that being impoverished does not amount to dropping out of school.

All stake holders should guide and mentor learners into appreciation education by inviting speakers who have succeeded in their careers to talk to learners.

Parents and other stakeholders in education ought to do away with traditional rites and customs such as early marriages, female genital mutilation, discrimination against the girl child in order to reduce if not avoid school dropout.

All stakeholders should advice learners on the dangers of having unprotected sex not only to avoid pregnancies but also other sexually transmitted diseases like HIV/AIDS.

Learners should also take responsibility of seeking advice from parents teachers and other leaders whenever they are faced with life challenges and difficulties.

The government should come up with policies of providing employment in order to reduce poverty levels in the country.

5.4 Suggestions for further research

Further research should be conducted to establish the “Gross enrolment and adult literacy levels as key makers of development in Mulala Location, Nzau district in Kenya.”

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: Questionnaires

(Administered to parents, teachers, local/religious leaders)

Kindly provide the following information. Be honest in your response and note that all your responses will be treated with utmost confidentiality and for the purpose of this study only.

Please tick where applicable

Background information of respondents

1. Name

2. Age

18-35 years

36-55 years

55 and above

3. Gender

Male

Female

4. Level of education

Primary level

Secondary level

College level

University level

5. Occupational

6. Most school dropouts from Mulala location come from poor families

Strongly agree

Agree

Strongly disagree

Disagree

7. Learner sustenance in schools in Mulala Location is dependant on learner's attitude towards schooling?

Strongly agree

Agree

Strongly disagree

Disagree

8. Traditional cultural beliefs and customs are a major stumbling block to maintaining female learners in schooling institutions?

Strongly agree

Agree

Strongly disagree

Disagree

9. Girls and boys are treated equally at school and home?

Strongly agree

Agree

Strongly disagree

Disagree

10. Cultural practices like female genital mutilation deny girls access to education?

Strongly agree

Agree

Strongly disagree

Disagree

11. Moral decay and unwanted early pregnancies among female learners is a major cause of school dropout?

Strongly agree

Agree

Strongly disagree

Disagree

12. The nature (Good or bad) teacher-learner perception determined frequency of school dropout out cases?

Strongly agree

Agree

Strongly disagree

Disagree

13. Some teachers have preference in teaching boys than girls?

Strongly agree

Agree

Strongly disagree

Disagree

14. Parents and teachers talk about sexuality, pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases to learners?

Strongly agree

Agree

Strongly disagree

Disagree

15. Larger number of learner's dropout of due to influence by their non-schooling peers?

Strongly agree

Agree

Strongly disagree

Disagree

16. The government policy on education and learner sustenance in schools determines frequencies of learner dropout

Strongly agree

Agree

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Thank you for your cooperation