

School-Related Determinants of School Completion in Public Primary Schools in Kenya: A Case of Kajiado North Sub-County, Kajiado County, Kenya

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Abstract

The rapid increase in enrolment in public primary schools has strained the facilities, resulting in low standards of sanitation and inadequate physical resources due to the rising population of pupils. The supply of drinking water to pupils is of questionable quality and has been indicated as a possible causal factor to escalating incidences of sickness among children. The combined effect of these factors has been, inconsistent school attendance, low school completion and in extreme cases dropout from school. This situation has presented challenges in relation to learners' school completion of the primary school cycle. This study sought to find out school related determinants of school completion among pupils in public primary schools in Kajiado North Sub-County, Kenya. Therefore the aim of this study was to evaluate the influence of sanitation facilities on dropout among pupils and identify physical resources influences on dropout among pupils in public primary schools in Kajiado North Sub-County in Kenya. Descriptive survey research design informed by the persistence, progression, retention, completion model as advanced by Levitz and Noel was used. The target population of this study consisted of 93 head teachers, 701 teachers in the 93 primary schools in five (5) educational zones in Kajiado North Sub-County. The study applied stratified random sampling technique to select the respondents to be included in this study. The sample size was determined using Gay's principle which yielded a sample of 141 teachers and 19 head teachers. Questionnaires were used to collect the data. Collected data was analysed using descriptive statistics using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The study established that sanitation facilities and school infrastructure contributed to pupil school dropout among pupils in public primary schools in the Sub-County. From the findings it can be concluded that the school-based factors were significant influences of educational dropout and should be put into account while dealing with wastage. Schools should have adequate sanitation and teaching learning facilities in order to actualize pupil completion in primary schools. These findings enhanced the understanding that school-based factors influenced wastage in public primary schools in Kajiado Sub-County.

Key words: School Completion, Dropout, Sanitation Facilities, Physical Resources.

INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of low school school completion has been a subject of interest to academics, researchers and policy makers all over the world. Education is the surest way to attain self-reliance and economic growth and development because an educated population is more productive and has better standards of living (Mbuda, 1983). However, in most developing countries, low school completion in primary school has been a major challenge to access and achievement of educational goals.

Muhammad and Muhammad (2011) indicated that school experiences serve as powerful antecedents to the decision by a learner to endure or drop out of school. For instance, Alimi (2004) observes that teaching learning processes do not occur in a vacuum but in an environment structured by facilities that are used to support the instructional activities in a school, in particular physical and sanitation facilities are key determinants of educational outcomes. It is therefore important that school management practices ensure provision of facilities that ensure learner support services in addition to quality instructional delivery. Physical and sanitation facilities entail providing clean, safe and comfortable environment for teaching and learning.

NOUN (2009) observes that appropriate infrastructure in schools reduces learner absenteeism and to improve school completion by creating a conducive environment for learners to find reason to be in school. In agreement with this view a study by Ejionueme (2007) in Nigeria, established that the poor physical infrastructure in schools adversely affected not only the teaching and learning processes but also retention and school completion of learners. Okoiye and Uche (2004) add that physical facilities define the academic environment of a school and also portray the quality of the institution in terms of its friendliness, safety and relevance, which in turn motivate learner focus on attainment of educational goals. Orodho (2005) hypothesized that school characteristics have a profound effect on retention rates among primary school pupils in Kenya. Noting the introduction of Free Primary Education (FPE) caused in over enrollment of pupils in public schools; this triggered a severe strain on the existing physical facilities hence resulting in a decline on the quality of education delivery in the country. Daraja Civic Initiative (2007) concurs with this view and adds that, since the introduction of FPE in 2003, the challenges to the availability and quality of free education have been compounded by lack of adequate physical facilities, learning equipment, overcrowding and insufficient sanitation facilities.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) and United Nations Children Education Fund (UNICEF) (2010), approximately 2.5 billion people in developing countries lack proper sanitation facilities and an additional 884 million people have no access to safe drinking water sources. Various stakeholders in education have partnered with UNICEF and formally launched efforts towards improving public health in schools particularly in provision of safe drinking water and sanitation (JCA, 2010). The ultimate goal of these interventions was to improve health among learners in schools, foster learning and also enable children to participate as agents of change within their homes and communities (WHO, 2008). Despite these efforts, provision of safe drinking water and sanitation facilities continue to be a challenge in public primary schools especially among nomadic pastoral communities (MoH, 2008). UNICEF (2012) Kenya Country Profile report indicates that safe drinking water and sanitation facilities in learning institutions are progressively gaining recognition as important for promotion of learners' well-being and school retention. However, majority of public primary schools in Kenya have unreliable supply of safe drinking water and sanitary facilities (UNICEF, 2012). This state of affairs ranges from unsuitable and insufficient sanitary facilities to utter lack of latrines and safe water for drinking. UNICEF (2012) further observes that lack of these facilities immensely contributes to high levels of absenteeism and the high drop-out rates among learners. Lack of sanitation facilities has a stronger impact on girls

than on boys because girls need safe, clean, separate and private sanitation facilities in their schools (UNICEF, 2012). Lutomia (2006) argues that since school children spend a most of their time in school, the relative lack of improper facilities exposes them to a multitude of health risks most diseases that compromise their attendance and school completion. The health risks may range from mild ailments and discomfort to potentially life-threatening diseases. UNICEF (2012) asserts that infections among school going children are more prevalent in schools in developing countries due to failure to offer appropriate sanitation facilities and hence disease spread from one pupil to another.

According to the Kenya National Water Development Report (2006), water supply systems in majority of primary schools are not in state of good maintenance; they are characterized by poor conservation measures as indicated by leaking storage tanks, corroded roof catchments and poorly installed gutters. In some schools, pupils draw water from nearby water systems using tins and carry the water to school for drinking and washing. Such water is of doubtful quality and may have direct effects on the health of the pupils, school attendance, and retention (UN-Water, 2006). A survey conducted by the Ministry of Education (MoE) in 2006 indicated that only 29% of all schools in Kenya, had access to clean drinking water and appropriate sanitation facilities. In some primary schools, a single pit-latrine served over 100 pupils (SWASH, 2009).

The Kenya government has invested heavily in terms of human and monetary resources in an attempt to ensure that all school age children attend school continuously to completion. However, the rapid increase in enrolment has strained the facilities in schools. In addition, supply of drinking water to pupils is of questionable quality which may cause sickness to the children. To a large extent, the quality of education in public primary schools has become compromised by poor physical resources. This scenario has presented challenges in relation to learners' school completion of the primary school cycle. In Kajiado North Sub-County, studies have revealed that the status of physical resources and sanitation facilities are severely strained and do not meet acceptable standards set by the Ministry of Education. Majority of the pit latrines are in a poor hygienic conditions and water supply to schools is either inadequate or non-existent. However, despite this state of affairs, limited empirical studies have been conducted especially in the study area to establish the effect of provision of these facilities as a determinant of school completion among pupils in primary schools. This is a gap in knowledge that this study sought to address. Therefore, the rationale of this study was to evaluate the school-related determinants of school completion among pupils in public primary schools in Kajiado North Sub-County, Kenya. This was through evaluating the influence of sanitation facilities on dropout among pupils in public primary schools in Kajiado North Sub-County in Kenya and identified the influence of physical resources on dropout among pupils in public primary schools in Kajiado North Sub-County in Kenya.

METHODOLOGY

The study used descriptive survey research design and was informed by the persistence, progression, retention, completion/graduation (PPRCG) model as advanced by Levitz and Noel (year?). The target population of the study consisted

of 794 respondents comprising of 93 head teachers and 705 teachers in the 93 primary schools in Kajiado North Sub County. The schools were distributed in five (5) educational zones as follows; Ewuaso (27), Kisamis (31), Magadi (17), Ngong (9) and Ongata Rongai (9). The study applied Gay's principle of 10-20% to determine the sample size which yielded a sample comprising of 141(20%) teachers and 19(20%) head teachers. Table 1 presents a summary of the population and the sample size. How was the sample selected?

Table 1: Population and Sample Size

Respondents	Population	Sample (20.0%)
1. Head Teachers	93	19
2. Teachers	705	141
Totals	798	159

Data for the study was collected by means of questionnaires administered to the sampled head teachers and teachers. The questionnaires captured data on the influence of sanitation and physical resources on pupils drop-out in public primary schools. The research instruments were piloted on a sample of 15 teachers and 10 head teachers and the collected data was used to compute a reliability coefficient which yielded a value of 0.803. This met the recommended threshold of 0.7 for internal consistence of descriptive studies (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2015). Validity of the instruments was ensured by expert opinion of the supervisors in the School of Education and Social Sciences, Karatina University. The collected data was analyzed using descriptive statistics with the aid of the computer software Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 and the findings were presented in form of graphs and narrations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results and discussion are presented in accordance with the objectives and hypothesis of the study.

a) The first research objective sought to assess the influence of sanitation facilities on dropout among pupils in public primary schools in Kajiado North Sub-County in Kenya. The sampled respondents indicated their views/opinions on a five point likert scale. The responses obtained were used to calculate a percentage. The findings are presented in Figure 1.

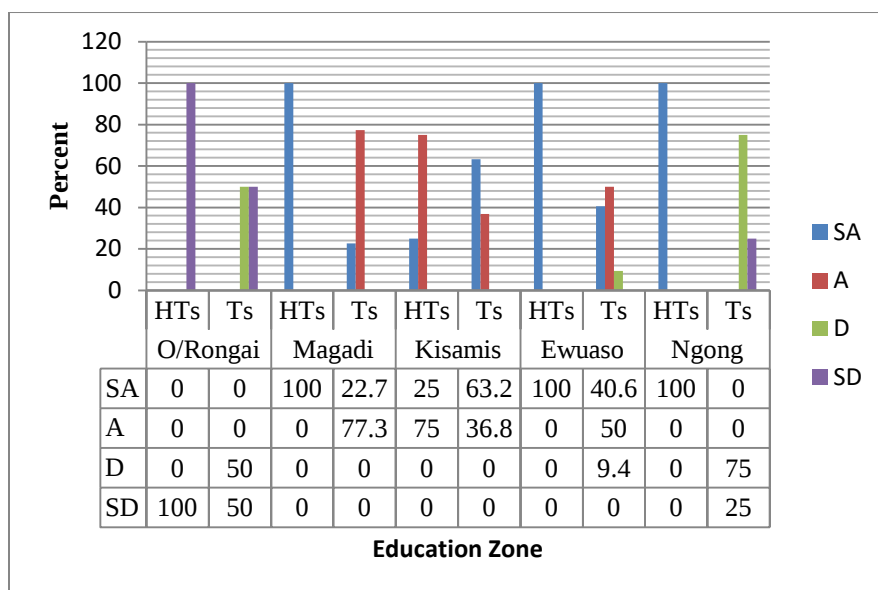


Figure 1: Sanitation Facilities and Pupil Dropout

Data in Figure 1 shows that all (100.0%) of the head teachers in Ongata Rongai education zone strongly disagreed that sanitation facilities contributed to pupil drop out in their schools, 50% of the teachers strongly disagreed and 50% disagreed. In Magadi education zone, all (100%) of the head teachers strongly agreed that sanitation facilities in the schools were a cause of dropout among pupils compared with 22.7% of teachers who strongly agreed and 77.3% who agreed. In Kisamis education zone, 75% and 25% of the head teachers agreed and disagreed respectively that sanitation in their schools was a cause of dropout among pupils. In Ewauaso education zone, 100% of the head teachers strongly agreed, 40.6% of the teachers strongly agreed, 50.0% agreed and 9.4% disagreed. In Ngong Education Zone, all (100%) of the head teachers strongly agreed that sanitation facilities in the schools were a cause of dropout among pupils, however 75% of the teachers disagreed and 25% strongly disagreed. The findings of the study revealed that on a general scale sanitation facilities contributed to drop out among pupils in public primary schools in Kajiado North Sub-County. This concurs with the research findings of a survey conducted by The Human Rights Watch report (2005) which established that in rural areas, pupils particularly girls drop out of school due to poor sanitation. The report noted that during menstruation period, girls were uncomfortable in school and therefore kept off school due to poor sanitation. During this period of absentia, the girls were married off by their parents who now viewed them to have acquired the required age for marriage. Sanitation facilities in the schools studied were severely strained with majority of the pit latrines in poor hygienic conditions. Add more literature to this section.

b) The second objective of the study sought to find out the influence of physical resources on dropout among pupils in public primary schools in Kajiado North Sub County in Kenya. Data was collected by means of a five point likert scale. A summary of the findings is presented in Figure 2.

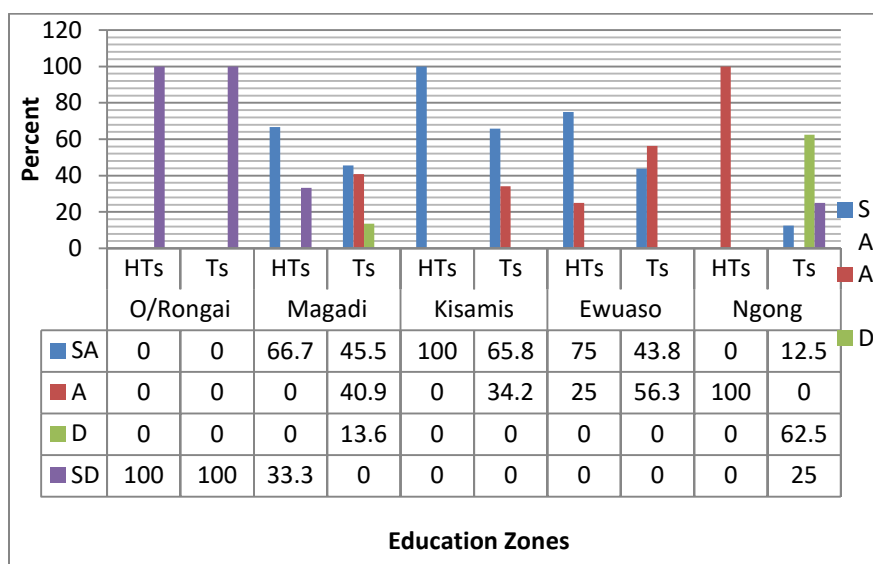


Figure 2: School Physical Resources and School Drop Out

Data presented in Figure 2 show that all (100%) of head teachers and teachers in Ong’ata Rongai education zone strongly disagreed that physical facilities in their schools were contributing factors to dropout among primary school pupils. In Magadi education zone, on whether physical facilities contributed to dropout of pupils, the responses of the head teachers were 66.7% strongly agreed and 33.3% strongly disagreed. The teacher responses in Magadi were; 45.5% strongly agreed, 40.9% agreed and 13.6% disagreed. In Kisamis, 100% of the head teachers strongly agreed, while 65.85% of the teachers strongly agreed and 34.2% agreed. In Ewuaso zone, 75% of the head teachers strongly agreed and 25% agreed. For the teachers, 43.8% strongly agreed and 56.3% agreed that physical facilities were contributing to dropout. Lastly, in Ngong all the head teachers agreed while 12.5% of the teachers strongly agreed, 62.5% disagreed and 25% strongly disagreed. This study undoubtedly established that school infrastructure contributed to pupil school dropout in Kajiado North Sub-County. From the findings it can be concluded that the school-based factors are significant influencers of educational wastage and should be put into account while dealing with wastage. Schools should have adequate teaching and learning facilities, proper staffing, and a conducive learning environment. From the results above, it can be argued that school-based factors influence wastage. According to Psacharopolous and Woodhall (1985), Rumberger (2008), Muhammad and Muhammad (2011) and Kane (2004) school resources, structural features and policies and practices, high opportunity cost of schooling for poor families, poor attendance, inappropriate curriculum factors which is excessively academic poor methods of teaching, distance travelled to school, excessive punishments, excessive homework and over-crowded schools are some of the factors causing school-based wastage. Break down this sentence into 2

This is due to the fact that it deters access to schools. In order to help boost educational access, it is therefore important to reduce the distance that students travel by establishing more secondary schools. The findings in this study concurs

with Mitchell and Forsyth (2004) which noted that student identification with school which is through a sense of belonging and valuing of school and related outcomes and trust relationships within the school were two main factors that determined school retention. Mitchell and Forsyth (2004) expanded the concept of student identification with their school to include trust relationships within the school.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study evaluated school related determinants of school completion in public primary schools in Kajiado North Sub-County, Kajiado County, Kenya. Results indicated that sanitation facilities had negative effect on school completion among pupils in public primary schools in the sub county. It was further established that school infrastructure contributed to pupil school dropout. From the findings, it can be concluded that the school-based factors are significant influencers of educational wastage and should be put into account while dealing with wastage. Schools should have adequate sanitation, teaching and learning facilities, proper staffing, and a conducive learning environment. From the results above, it can be concluded that school-based factors influence wastage in public primary schools in Kajiado Sub County. Its therefore recommended that Public primary schools address the issues of sanitation facilities and school infrastructure in order to enhance pupil school completion. It's also suggested that similar study should be carried out to find out gender differences in school completion among pupils in public primary schools in Kajiado Sub County.

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