

Original Research Article

Teachers' perceptions on the factors that influence school dropout among upper primary school pupils in Trans-Nzoia East, Trans-Nzoia County, Kenya

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Abstract

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Pupils' dropout works against the constitutional rights of a child and in the end; it can negatively affect a country's socio-economic development. The study sought to investigate teachers' perceptions on the factors that influence school dropout among upper primary school pupils in Trans-Nzoia East, Trans-Nzoia County, Kenya. The objectives of the study were, to establish ways in which teachers perceive cultural practices as influencing school dropouts, to find out teachers' perceptions on how insecurity influences school dropout, to determine teachers' perceptions on how pupils' family background influences school dropout and to find out teachers' perceptions on ways in which peer pressure influences school dropout. An ex-post facto study design was adopted for this study. The study was based on Vrooms' Expectancy theory of motivation as cited by Wayne and Miskel (2008). The target population was 250 respondents. The study used a sample population of 100 respondents, which included head teachers and class teachers. The research adopted a combination of simple random, purposive and stratified random sampling techniques. Questionnaires, Observation schedules and interview schedules were used to collect data. Data was analyzed by frequency, tables and percentages tables of descriptive statistics. Data was analyzed using the statistical package for the social sciences program (SPSS). The findings of this study revealed that negative cultural practices, insecurity in schools, parental negligence and negative peer pressure were major factors influencing dropout among upper primary school pupils according to teachers. This study is useful in that it recommends that schools can gradually introduce communication in English by pupils, moreover, punishment to victims should be mild. Stakeholders in child welfare should educate and encourage parents on the need to take active role in children's education whether formal or non-formal, teachers should trace the whereabouts of victims of pregnancy with an aim of encouraging them to continue with education, stakeholders can educate the public, teachers and pupils inclusive on human rights, besides teachers can devise ways of discouraging bullying like through counseling, more primary schools and village polytechnics can be opened up to cater for long distances and dropouts respectively, further, schools can engage in agro-business in order to raise enough food and extra money for poor pupils, more importantly pupils should be encouraged to seek guiding and counselling from teachers whenever in a dilemma

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INTRODUCTION

This chapter gives an introduction of the study. Specifically it discusses the background of the problem, the statement of the problem, purpose of the study,

objectives of the study, research questions, assumption of the study, scope and limitations of the study, justification of the study, significance of the study,

theoretical framework and operational terms in the study are defined.

The Kenyan government has systematically practiced the fight against school dropout since independence. To demonstrate its conviction to this mission, the recommendation of the 1990 Jomtiem world conference on education for all and the Dakar framework for action which endorsed the goals of Millennium summit of 2000 as cited by Sifuna (2005) were ratified. Finally, the people adopted the new constitution that had a clause on free and compulsory basic education (GoK, 2010, article 53). Moreover, the constitution strengthened the children act of 2001 (Go, 2001).

Background of the study

The post independent Kenya witnessed a rising thirst for education by Kenyans. It was these turn of events that propelled the independence government of President Kenyatta to appoint Educational Commissions whose mandate were to find the most suitable system of education for the changing circumstances. The most notable ones were the Ominde Commission (1964), the Bessey Report (1971) and the Gachathi Report (1976) and other successive reports by President Moi (Shiundu and Omulando, 1992, Otunga, 2010). These educational commissions and reports for instance highlighted the need for education system that would enhance labor development and national unity among Kenyans. The National Committee on Educational Objectives and Policies (NCEOP) also known as Gachathi Report (1976) focused its recommendations on solving the problem of unemployment believed to have caused by the existing system of education. The report noted that:

One of the major problems confronting the country is that of unemployment. The problem is aggravated by the annual outputs of school leavers whose number continue to swell following the enormous expansion of the education system in the first years of independent (Republic of Kenya, 1976, pg 33-34).

The Gachathi report (ibid) identified unemployment rate as stemming from school graduates, a view that was supported by the Mackay Report, (GoK, 1981). The Gachathi Report (1976) proposed for the introduction of free primary education from standard one up to Standard eight. This would have solved the problem of high rate of school dropouts that was a contributing factor to unemployment. The reports however, sketchily highlighted the problem of school dropout but did not lay much emphasis on it. Although the fight against school dropout rates did not end there, the government of President Kibaki in January 2003 made primary school education free and compulsory. The new constitution (GoK, 2010) adopted a clause on free and compulsory primary education in order for it to have legal backing. This was done as a way of putting emphasis on the rights

of a child (Otunga, 2010, Constitution of Kenya, 2010). The presidential action was also inline with the aims of Millennium Development Goals of Education for All (Universal Education) by 2015 and long-term national objectives of Vision 2030 of having high quality life for all its citizens (UNESCO, 2000, Republic of Kenya, 2007).

The World Bank report (2009) argues that the inability of households to shoulder high costs of education was because of deepening poverty in Kenya. The report continued to say that 56% of Kenyans live on or below the poverty line and 30.7% of children out of school cite costs as the main reason for non-attendance.

Despite the subsidies from donor agencies to alleviate the disparities in accessing primary education, it was revealed at the Dakar conference, Senegal (UNESCO, 2000) that use of funds allocated to education for EFA in most countries fell in the hands of rich minority and not the poor rural communities. (The Standard Jan.31st.2010 p16) revealed that '...the British government blew the whistle on massive fraud in the free primary education programme'. Fraud and poor disbursement of funds meant for education and empowering the poor rural communities economically had negatively affected the provision of quality education. Schools are forced to regularly make complaints about frequent delays by government to release funds meant for FPE in time.

In the event the government fail to disburse educational funds meant for free primary education on time, the hardest hit are public schools. The Nation Television (NTV) news 30th May, 2012 at 9pm reported a notice of strike given by the Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT) to the government for withholding funds meant for free primary education. By the end of May 2012, the government had not released money to schools. Such actions by the government make it impossible for schools to manage efficiently their financial obligation. In effect, most public schools find it difficult to provide essential teaching and learning facilities. It is from this background that head teachers take advantage of delay in delivery of FPE money to introduce private levies. Skovdal (2012) found out that inadequate and late disbursement of government funds was used by many primary schools as a scapegoat to introduce and hike school levies. Further, he argues that district officers and school managers ignored the government directives on providing free and compulsory education. Parents on the other hand are often enticed or forced to accept new levies. Parents do so against their wish with a hope that their children would be 'treated' well by school management and teachers.

Most public primary schools in Malawi were found to be in appalling condition as per the studies of World Bank (2004). Besides, Musisi et al (2003), in his report on causes of dropout in Uganda's primary schools, he established that most schools had no chairs forcing pupils to sit on dusty floors. Classrooms had no doors

and windows, rugged field for sports, few latrines for both boys and girls and with no doors, no library books and muddy walled classrooms with old iron sheets that leak whenever it rained. Moreover, learning process was made difficult as evidenced with constant overcrowding in classrooms, insufficient teaching and learning materials and under qualified teachers (Momanyi, 2009, *The Standard* Jan 26th 2011). Pupils who come from households where the environment is well kept and neat are at risk of losing hope whenever they are exposed to such unhygienic learning conditions.

The pastoral communities were not comfortable with the school curriculum because it was not relevant to their lifestyles and needs as established by Ali, (2000). To Ali, employable opportunities in other fields for instance pharmacy were irrelevant to the pastoralists. The problem was that this type of curriculum did not offer the pastoralists an opportunity to migrate or lead a nomadic lifestyle. Further, he argues that schooling to pastoralists did not add any value to them, since large herds of animals owned were enough to sustain them in their lifetime. Another cultural practice that enhances school dropout rate is initiation rite. Some families in Kenya that practice initiation rite for both girls and boys tend to be affected by high rates of school dropout (ibid, Mutai, 2010). The initiates are socialised to believe that they are more mature, ready for marriage life and to certain extent independent individuals. In Malawi for instance, after circumcision rite one was obligated to have sex as a proof that he was a grown-up. Besides, they were taught on how to have sex (Muthali and Zulu, 2008). In Marakwet, the area District education officer Gabriel Chebiegon observed that parents marry off their daughters after undergoing circumcision (*The Standard*, Jan. 3rd 2011). It is more likely that cultural practices would be influencing pupils' dropout rate in public primary schools in Trans Nzoia East, Trans-Nzoia County.

Studies by Nderitu, (1987), Ali, (2000), Yungungu, (2005), and Nairesiae (2006) reveal that women and girls were perceived to be an inferior sex in the society. Many families withdrew and kept girls at home because they believed that girls did not need education. Culturally a girl was to be cared for by a man in her life. It is from this point, that they identify some communities, the Kikuyu of Kirinyaga, and the Nandi and the Maasai of Rift Valley as some of the committees in Kenya that neglected girls' education and instead married them at an early age in order to get dowry. Further, they kept girls at home to work and take care of their siblings whenever parents were away or absent as compared to their boys or brothers. Despite the fact that Trans-Nzoia East is one of the wealthiest regions in the country because of agricultural resources, the worrying trend of primary pupils dropping out of school need to be established.

Conflicts both local and international instil fear among people and to a large extent children. Take for instance; Kenya underwent tribal conflicts immediately after the

2002 and 2007 general elections. The (*Standard* 4th Feb. 2008) reported how families who were displaced had camped in Eldoret show ground because of fear of being killed or hurt. Insecurity is a major factor that hinders people to function well in their daily activities. The tribal tension and conflicts are major hindrances to provision of Universal Primary Education (UPE). Therefore, any form of insecurity negatively affect the learning process.

Children who drop out of school fear being hurt physically or psychologically. Mwandoto (2006) as quoted by Momanyi (2009) asserts that a teacher in Kilifi went to court seeking for the reintroduction of caning in schools, a case that was supported by the late Starehe School's director Griffin. Today caning is administered in most schools though illegal. Therefore, children who fear being hurt opt to discontinue learning. Security is paramount in pursuit of education especially at this tender age. Day and Goleuch (1997) identify some types of psychological and physical violence as beatings and rape. To them, violence makes children susceptible to dropping out of school. This could have been the main reason why the Minister for Education Mr. Kilonzo praised schools that were child-friendly when releasing the 2012 KCPE results (*The Standard*, Jan.29th.2013).

Improving access and retention level in schools is a critical aspect to elevating socio-economic and political status of people. Studies have shown that education is one of the most important tools that shape the future of children. Education has a positive effect on people and increases informed participation in life activities (GoK, 1964, Eshiwani 1993, GoK, 2004 and World Bank, 2009).

Jamison and Lau (1982) postulates that agricultural productivity increased by an average of 8.7% when farmers were given four years of elementary education. Besides, data from Kenya Demographic and Health survey (KDHS) as quoted by Onyando and Omondi (2008) indicates that there are direct correlation between women's level of education and their quality of life. Girls who stay in school longer are less likely to marry early, become pregnant and drop out of school. Children born to under-educated mothers or parents are more likely to have lower chances of survival while at the same time are less likely to seek care for themselves and their children in case of illness. Yungungu (2005) affirms that educated women are in a better position to understand and claim their rights as well as participate in decision making at all levels in national development.

In 1948, on realisation that education was fundamental the United Nations came up with a charter dealing with the right to basic education by every one and further, this education was to be free and compulsory. To ensure that this objective was achieved, subsequent international conferences were organised and held to reaffirm their commitment to it. A notable education conference was held at Jomtien Thailand in 1990. The World Conference on Education for All (WCEFA) resolved that member countries should adopt policies

and practices that would ensure universal access to and completion of primary education or whatever higher level considered as basic by 2000 (UNESCO, 2000, Mondoh et al 2004). The WCEFA in 1990 revealed that more than 100 million children and adults failed to complete basic education programmes in member countries.

The Jomtien conference marked the beginning of the idea that education was the most effective tool in combating the evils that bedevil mankind. With time lapsing so fast, the UN member states discovered that they could no longer meet year 2000 timeframe of Jomtien; therefore, they decided to come up with a new Vision or plan 2015. According to them, every school age child by year 2015 should be in school and complete basic education. The reason for these turn of events was that the retention level of pupils in schools and enrolment rate was declining at an alarming rate contrary to the set time of Jomtien conference. A conference was held at Dakar Senegal in 2000 entitled Dakar Framework for Action, Vision for Education for All by 2015 (UNESCO, 2000) A notable commitment was adopted, that they were to do everything possible to reduce or eliminate costs popularly referred to as 'indirect' costs of schooling that had been employed by member countries. These indirect costs were on uniforms, books, excursions, motivational, private tuition, school meals, examinations and other several related fees levied on already poor parents. The conference had discovered that these levies charged on students were the cause of high rate of school dropouts.

In Kenya, the government has and is trying very much to ensure that children access education and complete full primary cycle of education by:

i) Allocating more funds to Education Ministry by the treasury. For instance, in the financial year 2012/2013 a close to 233.1 billion shillings of the total 1,459.9 billion budgets was allocated to Education, representing 16% of the total budget (Daily Nation 15th June, 2012)

ii) Free and compulsory basic education was made legal by the constitution (GOK, 2010, pg 38) 'Every child has the right to free and compulsory basic education'. The constitution also strengthened the Children Act of 2001 (GoK, 2001).

iii) Provision of short term loan to small enterprises like 'Kazi Kwa Vijana' (KKV) whose main objective is to enable rural poor youth stabilizes financially (Daily Nation 13th March 2009). Other important donor programmes are like Constituency Bursary Fund (CBF), Uwezo funds (The Standard 22nd.Feb 2014) which provide bursaries to needy children and loans to the youth and women respectively.

iv) Allowing Non governmental organizations (NGOs), private sector, and religious organizations to provide funds, and manage education such as World Bank, Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), World Food Programme (WFP), and United Nation

Children Fund (<http://softkenya.com/rducation/financing-education>) accessed 13th, March.2013. These programmes aims at enabling households to stabilize financially and subsequently meet daily needs including education requirements of their children. The government in so doing could have indirectly solved school drop out rate.

GoK (2005) report on Millennium Development Goals status indicates that about 82% poor households live in rural while another 18% in urban slums. Therefore the government targets to halving poverty percentage between 1990 and 2015. The objective is to ensure that by 2015 children everywhere, boys and girls alike are able to access and complete full primary school education. Besides, this action would cushion the problem experienced in schools like overcrowding, inadequate facilities among others.

Despite these efforts by the international community and Kenya by extension, a large portion of children enrolled in standard one in public primary schools are not able to complete primary education cycle of eight years to date. Many students abandon school before completion of their primary education. The symptoms of pupils who are susceptible to dropout are; being older than expected for his or her class level two, families being forced to pay for extra tuition which focuses heavily on drilling and exam preparation and three, increased absenteeism. About 15% of students are absent on a given day, with much higher absenteeism in upper primary school classes (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education-in-kenya>) retrieved Nov. 10th. 2013 Uwezo 2012).

This tragic cycle of events has not yet improved over the past few years, bearing in mind; the educational reforms that had been high on government agenda. During this time the government and the public have not been aware of the severity of the dropout problem among pupils in public primary schools.

Teachers play an important role in ensuring that educational objectives are achieved. Teachers evaluate their students' feelings regarding a program in action as Ornstein and Hunkins (1998) puts it. The perception of teachers is fundamental in the analysis of pupils' dropout rate, since they spend more time with pupils than any other person in any given year. Teachers record and check pupils' progress on a regular basis. Basing on educational calendar in Kenya, a teacher spend with a pupil about eight months in a year (<http://education/calender-kenya>) accessed March 9th.2013. Otunga et.al (2011) argues that teachers are always expected to change the thinking of many pupils at once. The stakeholders and parents inclusive, holds teachers accountable to pupils' behaviour change. The accountability envisaged by Otunga (ibid) is behavioural patterns of students not withstanding their drop out of school. Shiundu and Omulando (1992) postulates that, teachers organise and manage pupils learning experiences and environment, make observations of

Table 1. School wastage-upper primary classes (boys and girls) in Trans-Nzoia East

Primary school	Class	Year	Class 1 enrolment	Total current class 8 enrolment	Total population wastage. 2012
Chisare	8	2005	47	3	44
	7	2006	38	7	31
	6	2007	41	9	32
Chepkoiyo	8	2005	55	4	51
	7	2006	88	11	77
	6	2007	85	12	73
Marura	8	2005	60	9	51
	7	2006	58	6	52
	6	2007	55	6	49
Sibanga	8	2005	129	10	119
Tima	8	2005	79	24	55
	7	2006	97	15	82
	6	2007	107	32	75
Yuya	8	2005	142	4	138
	7	2006	162	8	154
	6	2007	150	10	140

Source: School Registers and Mark lists (2012)

behaviour either directly or indirectly and must understand the forces influencing student learning. It is important at this point to note that a teacher is the main link between the pupil, the parent, society and government. Therefore, a teacher can authoritatively give reason(s) to why a pupil would decide to drop out of school.

The trend of pupils dropping out while in upper classes in primary schools in Trans-Nzoia East is working against; one, Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of universal education for all by 2015, of which Kenya is a signatory. Two, Vision 2030, lays its foundation on education. Vision 2030 target is to ensure Kenya get or has skilled work force that will help in ensuring people of this country lead a high quality life and three, the constitution of Kenya (GoK, 2010) article 53 that articulates access to free and compulsory quality education for all children. School dropouts are more likely to engage in ant-social activities like crime besides negatively affecting economic development of the country if no stopgap measures are put in place.

The researcher for instance, sampled a few schools in Trans-Nzoia East, and found out the following statistics of school wastage, dropout inclusive.

The above statistics indicates how the problem of school dropout and wastage tend to increase in the final three classes (six, seven, and eight). Class eight is most hard hit. A further analysis of KCPE results of 2012 clearly demonstrates how schools register an average of 25 pupils per single school (The Standard 29th Jan. 2013) evidence that shows how few pupils progress successfully from class one to class eight. Table 1 demonstrates a clear discrepancy in the total population between the enrolment at class one and class eight of the

same cohort. Yuya primary school for instance, enrolled 142 in class one in 2005 but only 4 pupils progressed successively to class eight as at 2012, representing 2.8%. This means that 97.2% pupils were unaccounted for. It is this trend of events that aroused the researchers' interest in finding out teachers' perceptions on the factors that influence school dropout among upper primary school pupils in public primary schools in Trans-Nzoia East, Trans-Nzoia County in Kenya.

Statement of the problem

The government is committed to the realization of universal access to basic education as prescribed in the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals by 2015 (UNESCO, 2000). It also recognizes education as key to the development and protection of democratic institution and human rights.

Education is a crucial factor in solving major problems in the world as well as those that face humanity (UNESCO, 2000). Therefore, in full realisation of the importance of education the government of Kenya established and funded Commissions, Committees and Task forces with an aim of finding a lasting and most effective solution to the country's educational problems (Sifuna, 2005, Eshiwani, 1993). The recent one 'Task Force on the Re- Alignment of the Education Sector to the Constitution of Kenya 2010 (Daily Nation 2nd Feb. 2012). Access to primary school education is fundamental to government development strategy for various reasons one, universal primary education is central to the implementation of poverty reduction strategy. The acquisition of basic literacy skills and levels will expand

Kenyan's access to employment opportunities and a sustainable livelihood, two, a human resource development is fundamental to sustainability of the country's economic growth. Kenya's labour force can only participate in the competitive global economy if it has skills that come with education and three, is the most effective strategy for creating equity in education opportunities for survival and development (World Bank Report 2009).

The consequences of school dropouts remain tragic. Dropouts are much more likely than their peers who graduate from school to be unemployed, live in poverty, receiving public assistance, street beggars, in prison and on death row and parents with children who are likely to drop out of primary school themselves. Further dropouts are confined to semi-skilled, unskilled and less remuneration in informal sector such as house help and selling in kiosks to name but a few, which consequently enhances dependency ratio in the long run (Muganda, 1997). Primary school dropout is wastage of public funds. In Kenya for instance, the Education Ministry allocated more money in 2012 / 2013 financial year totalling 233.1 billion shillings (Daily Nation.15th June 2012). It will be difficult to achieve UPE by 2015 as envisaged in Millennium Development Goals (GoK, 2005) and the government's strategy for development Vision 2030. The above objective will remain a pipe dream if not the government might shift or will change goal posts by the time we reach year 2015 and even 2030.

Education is important to national development (Eshiwani, 1993). The current study is useful for the government and other stakeholders in understanding factors that cause school dropouts and therefore find a more effective and lasting solution to it. Abagi and Odipo, (1997) argues that, students who drop out of primary schools often relapse into illiteracy. Therefore, school dropouts do take back the country in its goal of improving literacy levels. However, what is puzzling today almost 50 years after independence is that Kenya is still trying to achieve the independence objective of fighting illiteracy, hunger and poverty.

Trans-Nzioa East is one of the Kenya's regions that should be having at least 90% school retention levels in public primary schools. However, visibilities of many school going age children who are supposed to be in school not withstanding the government policy of free and compulsory education is puzzling and need an urgent investigation. (See statistics on Table 1). Hence, there is an urgent need to find out teachers' perceptions on factors that influence school dropout among upper primary pupils in public primary schools in Trans-Nzioa East.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to investigate teachers'

perceptions on the factors that influence school dropout among upper primary school pupils in Trans-Nzioa East, Trans-Nzioa County in Kenya.

Objectives of the study

The study was guided by the following objectives:

1. To establish teachers' perceptions on ways in which cultural practices influence school dropout among upper primary school pupils.
2. To find out teachers' perceptions on how insecurity influences school dropout among upper primary school pupils.
3. To determine teachers' perceptions on how pupils' family background influences school dropout among upper primary school pupils.
4. To find out teachers' perceptions on ways in which peer pressure influences school dropout among upper primary school pupils.

Review of related literature

In this chapter, the researcher presents a review of related literature on Teachers' perceptions on factors that influence pupils to drop out of public primary schools. The first part presents a historical perspective in general, while the last part examines in detail teachers' perceptions on the factors that influence pupils to drop out of public primary schools.

School dropout, a historical perspective

Since independence in 1963, the government introduced various measures to regulate the provision of basic education. The evolution of education policy over the post-independence era had been driven by the reports of various commissions and taskforces of education, ranging from the Ominde Commission (1964), which set pace for education policy in Kenya, to the recently concluded Odhiambo Taskforce 2012 (Daily Nation 2nd Feb 2012) which has engineered the ongoing education policy reforms.

By doing so, the post-independent Kenya government aimed at putting in place mechanisms and detailed measures of fighting illiteracy as well as finding a lasting solution to this problem. The Commissions that came close to targeting pupils' dropout issue was the Gachathi Report (1976) and the Mackay Report (1981) respectively. However, they (Gachathi and Mackay) only came up with proposals of ways of solving unemployment rate in the country. The Gachathi report recommended for free primary education from class one up to class eight. It also, revealed that poverty index was high in rural areas. Gachathi recommended for provision of education

to all as a measure against poverty. Though Gachathi recommended education for all in order to fight illiteracy he fell short of targeting school dropouts who also enhance illiteracy levels. On the other hand, the Mackay report recommended for a school curricular that would allow the youth acquire practical skills that would be utilized for both wage employment and self-employment.

Though the Gachathi report recommended for introduction of free primary education, the programme proved to be unsustainable, following the withdrawal of donor funding in the 1980s. The Kamunge report (1988) recommended for reverse of this program of free education and it mainly focused on educational financing which led to the reintroduction of cost-sharing policy in education between the government, parents and local communities. The cost sharing policy once again led to high rate of pupils dropping out of public primary schools. However, public outcry and pressure from international community forced President Kibaki in 2003 to implement universal primary education as per the Jomtien initiative of 1990.

The long-term National policy (Vision 2030) lays more emphasis on ways of making Kenya a newly industrializing and middle-income country. This would enable Kenya to provide high quality life for all its citizens by the year 2030 (Republic of Kenya, 2007). The Children Act (2001) supported by the Constitution of Kenya (2010) article 53 articulates access to quality and compulsory basic education for all children as a basic human right. These, were some of factors that led to reintroduction of free and compulsory primary education. It was presumed that these measures would assist in solving school dropout rates however the problem still persist up to today.

The Gachathi report (1976) identified unemployment as key to curriculum changes. However, absent in their recommendations was the issue of non-completion of primary education or school dropout, though it would have been a variable in offering solution to the unemployment rate. More importantly, the Commissions did not tackle the issue of school dropout head on. The Mackay report (1981) can be singled out as one of the contributing factor of primary school dropout. One of the objectives or pillars of the 8-4-4 policy were the assumption that it will equip pupils with employable skills thereby enabling school dropouts at all levels to be either self-employed or secure employment in the informal sector (Republic of Kenya 1981, Shiundu and Omulando, 1992, Makori, 2005, Otunga, 2010). The system emphasized on independence of a pupil at every terminal point. The terminal point was not fixed at a particular class hence, any class would be interpreted as terminal point not withstanding end of primary school examination (KCPE). The knowledge that one would be able to successfully live a life, after having partly undergone schooling in itself encouraged pupils to drop out of school. Makori (ibid) notes that the Mackay report can be

prescribed as the most devastating experience in the history of the country's educational policy.

Provision of education to all Kenyans is fundamental to the success of the government's overall development strategy. Sessional Paper No 1 of 2005 on policy framework for education, training and research spelled out the education policy towards the realisation of economic development. The policy also spelled out the government's commitment to realisation of universal access to basic education.

During the release of Kenya certificate of primary education (KCPE) results of year 2011, the Minister for education professor Ongeru noted with concern that approximately 200,000 pupils had failed to sit for that year's examination (KBC news, 28th Dec. 2011). The statistics indicated that a certain fraction of pupils might have dropped out of school, not withstanding those who repeated the class or died. It can be argued that to mitigate the problem of school dropout, president (Uhuru) has planned to introduce free Laptops to all class one pupils in the republic. The argument is that the project will be an effective tool for learning, enhance access and equity, and finally empower Kenyans to be Information Communication and Technology (ICT) literate and competitive globally (www.freelaptops-in-kenya.org) accessed 15 Jan 2014

A good number of youth in Trans-Nzoiia East learn in public primary schools. Therefore, the presence of school going age children loitering, idling around, engaged in small or petty business and the increase in crime rate which is closely associated with school dropouts as indicated in justification of the study in this paper is evidence enough to point a finger at non-completion of primary school education today. A report by Uwezo (2011) for the year 2010 indicated that 4/10 children were missing in each primary school daily in Trans-Nzoiia East. The uwezo report indicates clearly that absenteeism is on the rise. Absenteeism is one of the symptoms of school dropout among pupils.

Cultural practices and their influence on school dropout

These are peoples' customs, belief systems and behavioural patterns over the years (www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/culturalpractice) accessed 26th, march.2013. If for instance a child has an origin from a family that value cattle keeping then that child will probably value cattle at the expense of say education. What follows is a discussion of different cultural practices in Kenya and their influence on school dropout.

Language problem

Schooling that cuts off the child from the environment in

which she or he is used to, tends to cause an internal conflict within the child. In case of schooling, the school comes with its established culture, which is entirely new to the child who before was used to his or her family cultural patterns and behaviour. The Ominde Commission (1964) as quoted by Shiundu and Omulando (1992, p. 326) argues that:

Vernacular languages were essential for verbal communication and there should be no difficulty including a daily period for story telling in the vernacular, or similar activities in the curriculum of primary....

When schools use vernacular languages, then they establish the connectivity between the home and school setting. One of the aims of the Millennium Development Goals(<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/millinium-Development-Goals>) is to provide Universal Primary Education (UPE) by 2015. However, an impediment to achieving UPE is the medium of instruction in primary schools.

In situations where pupils from a different language are taught in a language of the government or dominant society, there is always a communication breakdown. According to research, (ibid) students learn to read more quickly when taught in their mother tongue. This in turn help them read the second language more quickly than those who were taught in a new language at the initial stage of their learning (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/multilingual-education>, Ornstein and Hunkins, 1998, Urevbu, 1985) postulates that mother tongue plays an important role in instruction by enabling the learner to translate speech into graphic symbols. Mehrotra (1998) asserts that students, who have learned to read in their mother tongue, learn to read in second language more quickly than those who are first taught to read in the second language.

In Western Europe, there was a language problem among the minority communities such as the Germans in Denmark, the Danes in German, the Welsh and Scots in England. Educators agreed that learning problems among students emanated from a Medium of Instruction .Since English was a MI in British schools, it became evident that it was a major obstacle to African and West Indians migrants to learn in British schools. Most of them dropped out of schools since they could not express and gain much from British Schools.

A language of instruction in schools must be one that establishes a bond between home and school environment. The Daily Nation (4th March 2014 pg 9) cites the Sessional Paper of 2012 that 'the language of the catchment area (mother tongue) shall be used...in the education of lower primary children. In Kenya today, most families in rural settings communicate and transact their daily activities in a local dialect. Therefore, matters get worse or hard, when in some of schools children are forced to communicate in English or a new language. Besides, other pupils are punished for failing to speak in English. Okwako (2011) and Othuon et al (2006) argues

that teachers have a share of blame in the use of English in communication and teaching. They say that teachers are poor in speaking, reading, writing skills and cannot express clearly and effectively. This state of affairs indicates that they are more comfortable when using a local dialect that is inline with what (Bishop, 1985 p.63) asserts, "a curriculum has to guide and orientate pupils towards the culture in which they live their lives". However, when pupils are forced to use another language it makes them to lose hope and become vulnerable to school dropout. When releasing the Kenya Certificate of Secondary School Examination 2013 results the Cabinet Secretary for Education Professor Kaimenyi directed that all primary schools must teach lower classes using local languages (Daily Nation March 4th 2014 pg 9). The paper notes that:

...the use of local languages in the formative stages of child development was critical and had scientifically been proven to be productive...it ensures smooth transition from the home to the school environment for first time school-goers.

Vroom's expectancy theory of motivation indicates that the belief that a task can be achieved if only it is attainable and when it not then the option left is to withdraw. Pupils who fail to communicate or write in English more often than not loose hope and eventually drop out of school. However, it will be interesting to know how language as a media of instruction in schools influences pupils to dropout in public primary schools in Trans-Nzioa East.

Initiation rites and related practices

In most African communities, initiation rites provided children with an opportunity to be trained in adulthood roles: therefore, at graduation it propelled the initiates into adulthood status and roles. The initiates were taught on roles that were often in conflict with schooling and its moral conduct. The instructions received by initiates upon graduation had instilled in them a sense of maturity and thereafter it meant that they resumed the roles of adulthood as revealed by Ali (2000).

Abagi and Odipo (1997) argue that a new behaviour developed among the initiates who continued with schooling. The initiates developed a negative attitude towards teachers and schooling. The boys viewed male teachers as equals, while female teachers as people of low status who could take orders from boys pupils. The girls voluntarily or were forcefully married off. Girls in most of African communities were interpreted culturally in terms of wealth generation (dowry), hence there was no need of allowing girls to stay in school and delay or deny a family an immediate wealth (dowry) as per studies of (Abagi and Odipo, 1997, Ali 2000, UNICEF, 2003, Yungungu, 2005, Nairesiaie, 2006). Further, any schooling action that was perceived to be a challenge to

their ego, and against to what was instilled among the initiates during the time of training or seclusion, could not go unchallenged. For instance, the male pupils would challenge female teachers on the strength that female teachers are inferior who are supposed to take orders from them. The new behaviour exhibited by pupils especially boys are contrary to most school moral codes GoK (2001).

Parents with little or no education levels perceive education as a waste of time and cannot add any value to their children. Therefore, parents who fall in this category hasten to withdrawal their children from school (The Link, April.2011) in order for children to help them at home. The Standard (17th, Dec.2012 p.4) asserts that,

The problem is compounded by the fact that some parents have little enthusiasm for education and instead of encouraging children to remain in school, choose to just look the other way. Among these children, there are those who desire education but the parents' lifestyles hinder their dream.

Where as boys were assigned to look after animals, girls were to assist with household chores. Capital news (2nd Sept. 2011 9pm) cited a case in Meru where girls were taken into Miraa plantation with full knowledge of parents and church leaders. The District commissioner of Igembe North, Macharia Njiinu associated the practice with girls' dropout from school at classes five and six.

The dropout rate among pupils in public primary schools in Trans-Nzioa East could be associated with initiation rites and its effects. Though most people indicate that culture is no longer influencing the pupils' behaviours, but the rate at which pupils are dropping out of school makes it a suspect. Therefore, there is a possibility that initiation rites and related cultural practices could be influencing the rate at which pupils are dropping out of public primary schools today in Trans-Nzioa East.

Teenage pregnancies and related interpretation

Report by the Forum for Africa Woman Education (<http://www.fawe.org/files/fawe-news-83.pdf>) accessed 15th. Jan 2013 indicates that about 8,000 to 13,000 girls drop out of school each year due to pregnancy. A study by Musisi et al (2003) shows that teenage pregnancy and its subsequent cultural interpretation help to keep most of the affected girls at home. Onyando and Omondi (2008) asserts that girls often fail to get someone to look after their baby and even if admitted back to school, there is a possibility that she may frequently miss classes. Besides, parents and the community view her as a grown up who is ready to take up household duties independently. A girl who is a victim of early pregnancy often finds it hard to juggle the pressure of young motherhood and school. If she is not given any assistance by her parents or society, then dropping out of school becomes an option. This is because she would want to reduce her engagements

and concentrate on her baby (Serem, 2006).

The social stigma (Ibid, Ali, 2000 Yungungu, 2005, Nairesiae, 2006) attached to teenage pregnancy plays a major role in denying a girl child the opportunity to resume classes after giving birth. The findings reveal that girls face humiliation and isolation from both teachers and colleagues whenever they attempt to go back to school. Two, Nairesiae (2006, p.116) opines that

Many girls leave school altogether because they feel unsafe and unwilling to remain in an environment that has failed to protect them....Sexual harassed child loose interest in school, while school authorities take no steps to ensure that girls have a sense of security and comfort at school, neither do they counsel nor discipline boys who commit acts of violence.

Moreover Murray (1994) asserts that some teenagers would rather be lonely than risk public humiliation. Three, parents and teachers perceives these girls as a bad influence on others. Four, Parents are sceptical of returning the girl to school for fear of loosing more resources, besides, a fear of second or another pregnancy and five, a girl who gets pregnant when not married is interpreted as disgrace to the family. A girl, who is part and parcel of culture often drop out of school without a valid reason but only to obey and respect cultural strictures that are of little use Daily Nation (22nd July 2012).

Teenage pregnancy and its cultural interpretation are cited as one of the factors influencing the rate at which girls drop out of public primary schools. The teachers, parents and pupils share the blame for failure to complete primary education because of pregnancy. Trans-Nzioa East will offer a good opportunity to know if the same applies, despite the government's policy of return-to-school after giving birth.

Security Factors and their influence on school dropouts

According to www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/security, is a state that is free from fear, danger, doubts and even risk. The conditions to which pupils are exposed to in some public primary schools are not free from harm. This state of affairs in most primary schools influences dropout rate. What follows is a discussion of security issues in Kenya and their influence on school dropouts.

Violence at school and its influence on school dropout

One of the goals of EFA (UNESCO, 2000 Abagi and Odipo, 1997) was that all young children must be nurtured in safe and caring environment that allow them to become healthy, alert, secure and able to learn. The Standard, (20th Feb. 2008, pg. 6) in her commentary

argues that:

What sends chill down the spine of many parents is the realisation that school managers have lost control and cannot stop bullying and other unbecoming behaviour that threatens to turn schools into death camps. The truth is that bullying in schools goes on unabated and appears an stoppable.

Bullying in schools manifests in form of, nicknames, abusive terms directed to individuals, tearing and snatching one's property like pencils, books or even clothing. In extreme case, a child is beaten or even bruised by peers. According to the study by Poipoi (1999), bullying instils a sense of fear to victims. Students who are bullied tend to perform poorly in academic work, feel neglected and not loved. According to Murray (1994), a child who is bullied behaves differently, he or she exhibit some of the following behaviours she or he is impulsive, aggressive, and disruptive. He or she eventually drops out of school because of fear, loneliness and truancy, and in some extreme case, commits suicide.

Teachers indirectly or directly perpetuate violence activities against pupils. A study carried out by Shilavika (2006) and Ngundu (2010) reveals that teachers and prefects in some schools use physical punishment like caning, despite its ban by the government. The infliction of corporal punishment is routine, arbitrary and often brutal. Further, in Uganda teachers' violence against students was a common phenomenon in primary schools. Musisi et al (2003) in their findings at Abongodyang and Kiyembe primary schools in Lira and Rubanda respectively affirm that, students were punished for certain offences. The punishment given out varied from,

- i) Doing extra work after school like slashing, cleaning toilets and collecting garbage
- ii) Caning or corporal punishment
- iii) Teachers made students who failed to wear school uniform to stand in front of the class room for the rest to make fun of him or her saying 'shame on you for failing to wear uniform.
- iv) Teachers forced students to kneel for long periods for instance in front of a class to enumerate but a few.

Schools now are no longer places where one would admire to be as stipulated by EFA goals. In Kenya, despite the government's ban on acts of violence against children, and enforced by the Children Act 2001 (GOK, 2001). Teachers by intend or omission and to a certain extend persuade parents to enforce corporal punishment and other forms of punishment oblivious of the Children Act and even the Kenya's Constitution on the rights of a child. The Constitution of Kenya (2010, pg 38) states that:

Every child has the right to be protected from abuse, neglect, harmful cultural practices, all forms of violence, inhuman treatment and punishment, and hazardous or exploitative labour.

A study done by Chege (1994) reveals that girls experienced unwanted sexual advances on their way to and from school. Male neighbours and relatives at home

also sexually harass schoolgirls. Sexual harassment is more defined in slum areas. Moreover, male teachers and pupils present a similar threat to girls through touching, pinching and name-calling. Muchinsky (2007, p.201) reveals that:

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favour, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. When submission to or rejection of this conduct explicitly or implicitly affect an individual... unreasonably interferes with the individuals' work performance or creates an intimidating hostile or offensive work environment.

In a research done by Uwezo (2013) reveals that most schools were yet to pay adequate attention to safety of learners besides, physical and sexual safety. A child who is exposed to these inhuman and cruel treatment that are humiliating, more often that not gets demoralised and destabilised. The child would eventually look for alternative ways of protecting herself or himself from such abuse Gok (2001). Murray (1994 pg 514) argues that "some teenagers would rather be lonely than risk public humiliation". This could be part of the reasons why pupils in public primary schools in Trans-Nzoia East are dropping out of school for fear of being subjected to violence or harmful activities by people whom they respect as well as their peers. To the contrary, Loe and Burkam (2003) observe that students are less likely to drop out of schools in which they feel they have positive relationship with their teachers.

Long distance and school attendance

According to Kabiru and Njenga (2009) long distance, reduce the chance of pupils going back for lunch especially in those schools where lunch programmes are not offered. The weather conditions also make schooling difficult especially during rainy and cold seasons. The ever-changing season spell doom to most of the rural children; since they are rained on or exposed to extremely cold conditions than usual. Besides, the path routes used daily tend to become muddy and slippery. Trans-Nzioa East has a terrain, which has steep valleys and hills especially in Makutano and Chepsiro zones, hence; pupils are exposed to rough conditions during rainy and cold season. It becomes more dangerous with lightening and thunderstorms. For pupils who are day scholars it is a nightmare.

The Nation Television (NTV News, 6th Oct. 2011) reported a case where a girl aged 5 years was abducted, raped and brutally murdered. She was eventually dumped in banana plants at Kanunga in Kiambu County. These cases of abduction, rape and murder of primary school children who commute daily are common and are now taking a new dimension that is a worrying trend is causing worries among parents and children as well. For instance, the Maasai whose children often walk long

distances develop fear for their daughters' security during long walks (www.maasaigirlseducation.org) retrieved on 30th April 2013. Long distances between home and school made parents in Bangladesh during the time of Taliban rule (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/universal_primaryeducation) to withdrawal their children from school because they could not trust the security of children especially girls along the way. They did so after several children were found raped and murdered along the way. Given such incidences parents in public primary schools tend to develop fear of allowing their children to continue learning due to perceived or the unexpected along the routes used daily (Chege, 1994).

Musisi et al (2003) argues that commuting to and from school led to lowering of morale among pupils in primary schools in Uganda. Low morale would have been a result of waking up very early but arriving at school late, which in turn influenced students' academic performance negatively. According to Ibrahim et al (2008), pupils' drop out rate is determined by an increase in distance from school to home. Therefore the further it is, the higher the chances of dropping out. Jagero et al (2010) asserts that girls who stayed near schools performed better than those who came from far. To them the reason was that they would regularly miss lessons and be punished for that.

In the study (ibid) and Raju (1973) as cited by Mutai (2010) further asserts that long distances led to lateness to school besides making pupils getting exhausted which in turn affected their rate of concentration in class. It will be interesting to associate long distance with school dropouts in public primary schools in Trans-Nzoia East.

Family Background and its influence on school dropout

Trans-Nzoia East is one of the Kenya's regions that depend on agriculture especially on maize production as her main economic activity. The region is presumed to be economically stable. However, high school dropout rate among upper primary pupils is a factor that is puzzling today. The question is; does the family background influence this phenomenon?

The government of Kenya implemented the programme of Free and Compulsory Primary Education in 2003 (Otunga, 2010) which led to influx of children to schools, raising the total primary school population to over 7 million. Two reasons explains that phenomena, one, was that education became free as all levies were waived and two, there was no age limit to those who sought enrolment (Kabiru and Njenga, 2009). Despite the government's initiatives and support from international donor agencies targeting at reducing and eliminating school dropouts: dropout rate is still significant in most public primary schools. In a research done by Uwezo as

cited by The Standard (22nd, July 2013) indicate that 2/5 of children aged 6-16 are out of school.

Majority of households in Kenya are poor, therefore children are left at home to takeover house responsibility, as parents are relieved to go and engage in casual work away from home. This is done in order to supplement household's income (World Bank 2009). Children voluntarily or are directed by parents to engage in part time business. World Bank Report (1995) as quoted by Malenyi (2008) note that poverty strains the relationships between children and parents.

The Standard (18th March 2012) reveals that poverty makes children to run away from home to go and fend for themselves in whichever methods they find appropriate such as stealing, robbery and commercial sex. At the coast, some boys go to the length of pimping young girls, including sisters to tourist. Abagi and Odipo (1997, p.18) opined that:

The level of poverty has forced families to resort to child labour for their survival. Children are increasingly employed in domestic activities, agriculture, and petty trade of business. Poor households and in some cases children themselves have to carefully analyse the opportunity costs of education as a result parents have continued to send their children, particularly daughters into the labour market, mainly as domestic workers in urban centres. Meanwhile boys from agriculturally rich regions abandon school in order to earn money...

The Nation Television (NTV, 9pm news, 17th Feb. 2012) displayed a 20-year-old Emmanuel Katana of Taito Primary School in Kilifi County who was doubling schooling and shoes repairing. The student often did shoe repairing at free time in order to raise some user money for his upkeep and to support his parents at home. According to Taito Primary School management Emmanuel was not performing well in academic work, the main reason was that he could not successfully double academic work and business.

The poverty index among rural households has extended to school. The introduction of Free Education in primary schools has negatively affected the schools' development programmes. Some primary schools are in pathetic conditions. Walala Primary School in Kanduyi of Bungoma County depicts a school that is in a state of neglect. The school has only one latrine, no structure that is complete for use and to make matters more worrying is that children learn under a large stone that acts as a classroom (Citizen Television News 7th June 9pm, 2012,) not withstanding shelter. The conditions at Walala depicts a school that is not gender friendly since it has only one toilet for both teachers and students who comprise of females and males. Therefore, it is important to note that pupils could be dropping out of primary schools in Trans-East because of similar conditions as that of Walala primary.

Attractive environment lift human spirit. Morality is

about good of the inner human person and the surrounding (Gok, 2001, Musamas, 2006). Teaching in a well-groomed school with adequate facilities is easier, than in poor and ugly environment. Most of the public primary schools lack these basic facilities (Muruiki, 2005). Physical facilities are in a state of collapse if no stopgap measures are undertaken. As Musamas (ibid) puts, human being have the love of aesthetics, which could be a root cause to why children are dropping out of school before completing full primary education of eight years. The Walala primary school picture in Bungoma County might be a replica of what is happening in some of Trans-Nzioa East's public primary schools.

Dropout rate in Marsabit District was associated with school levies or fees. Since, most of the families in this Arid and Semi-Arid District are extremely poor and therefore, meeting school fees was extremely hard (Ali, 2000). Though the government had waived fees and even went further to provide basic requirements to students, a good number of pupils, despite these efforts, still failed to attain full primary school education.

Fishing activities in Budalangi Division of Busia District had increased the rate at which pupils were dropping out of school, according to the study done by Mwabi (2010). The study reveals that most of the families along Lake Victoria were poor hence; parents encouraged their children to engage in fishing in order to raise some income. Besides, Kanyandago (2002) asserts that some youth or students felt that fishing activities were more lucrative than going to school therefore; it could generate enough income for them.

Upper primary school pupils in Trans-Nzioa East might have lost hope in schooling and instead are trying an alternative avenue, probably in seeking employment as domestic workers, small or petty business, idling and even engaging in crime. To them education is not associated with any value. This concurs with Vrooms' expectancy theory of motivation. The low expectancy level here is generated out of the fear that however much one study in school he or she cannot pass the examination or transit to secondary education. The perceived bleak future to these type of children can only be reversed by trying luck in income generating activities.

A survey in both Uganda and Malawi identified that, the root causes of primary school dropouts in rural areas was the 'secret' or silent introduction of user levies especially on uniform, meals, field trips, private tuition, motivational fee, periodic examination and certificates (Muganda, 1997, World Bank, 2004, GoK, 2007, www.maasaigirls-educationfund). To enhance total secrecy on 'hidden fees' money collected are not receipted (The Standard May, 2nd.2010). Head teachers act this way in order to avoid being caught by Ministry of Education officials. Some schools Veele and Sarah (2008) reveals that though they exempted parents in paying these levies, school managements had devised alternative ways of denying education to children from

poor background by withholding report cards and refusing to issue textbooks to their children, intimidating and humiliating families who failed to pay through comments.

When parents fail to attend school meetings, head teachers take advantage to charge extra levies. The GoK (2003) directs schools to forward resolutions of school meetings to the ministry for approval and subsequent implementation. Therefore, failure to attend meetings has given school managements leeway of introducing several levies that later on become burdensome. They are such practices adopted by schools that influences drop out rate among pupils, Trans-Nzioa East inclusive.

However, to the contrary poverty not only leads to school dropouts but also draws pupils to school. Poverty therefore plays a major role in reducing the rate of dropouts. In a study done in Maputo, Mozambique (Veele and Sarah, 2008) asserts that poverty acted as a source of hope for future employment and a way out of dire poverty. Poverty therefore, does not wholesomely explain a puzzle related to dropout rate among upper primary pupils in public schools.

African traditions required the whole community to participate in upbringing children. However, today few parents are child oriented than the previous generations (Malenyi, 2008). Uwezo (2011) revealed that 15/100 families had not attended school; therefore children dropping out of school was higher to these families than families that attended school. In a study on effects of parental involvement and gender factor on children's education and academic performance in western division of Kisumu municipality, Fedha, (2013) argues that parents in Kisumu municipality were more concerned with income generating activities than academic affairs of their children. According to the Ministry of Education (2003), parents have a duty to meet, discuss, agree and approve any issue the school undertakes. Therefore, children might have skilfully utilized this loophole to drop out of school whenever they experienced any problem. Furthermore, some parents failed to guide their children on the importance of education. The Daily Nation (22nd June 2010) reported that KNEC in its survey on standard 3 pupils established that 16/10 pupils had repeated a class and 7/10 regularly miss school. It is because of the current permissiveness among parents that has influenced dropout rates among upper primary pupils.

The poverty index among rural households may be the root cause to why schools cannot sustain students. The government of Kenya grand capitation of 1020 shilling per a child per term in public primary schools is too little to maintain a child (Daily Nation, 2nd Feb. 2012). This is the reason why 'silent' levies are creeping back into the system with the full knowledge of Educational officials, parents and school management in contravention of the government policy of Free and Compulsory primary education.

Pupils in Trans-Nzioa East could be dropping out of school because their parents are not able to afford or

raise these other levies imposed on them, and two, both children and parents perceive education as having no value. According to expectancy theory of motivation low level of instrumentality among pupils is generated out of the perception that education no longer leads one to direct employment.

Peer influence and its influence on school dropout

Lamb (1996) on social learning theory asserts that children seem to acquire behaviours simply by watching them performed by others. A group demands loyalty (Mwiti, 2005). Murray (1994 pg 508) asserts

Adolescents become highly dependant upon one another for self-esteem companionship and intimacy. Peers influence adolescent decision making at every-level...conformity means one will benefit from the group support.

Muganda (1997) noted that girls were afraid to go back to school in Shinyalu, Kakamega district because they found it not valuable after carefully looking at their peers who had completed school. Failure to secure gainful employment by school graduates at whatever level created negative attitudes towards learning (Cole, 2002). The report of the Task Force on Student Discipline (Gok, 2001 p.70) highlights the fact that:

Lack of employment has led to creation of an attitude that education, and schooling is for passing time a waiting to go back to join the queue of poverty once again which leads to a bleak future.

Schooling is interpreted in terms of a gateway to prestigious employment. However, on scrutiny of their peers who had passed examination and subsequently failed to secure employment, give those in school an impetus to drop out. Therefore, to them education may not add any value to their life.

Negative peer pressure may lead adolescents into antisocial behaviour. The Maasai Girls Education Fund (www.en.maasaigirls-education-fund) reveals that the Maasai girls once circumcised, their peers ridicule them if they continue with their education, because schools are for girls and not mature women. Negative peer pressure further may make a child very rough, arrogant and provoke fighting with others at slightest provocation. Yet others may rebel against authority and social norms. The network of friends and age mates who dropped out of school in most cases entice those still in school with goodies or 'best life' outside classroom and school. More often than not, the dropouts talk about freedom from schooling and the advantages accompanying that kind of freedom such as access to sexual gratification or pleasure, drugs like alcohol, cigarettes and visiting of social joints like Coastal beaches and Cinema halls (Gok, 2001, Mwiti, 2005). Besides, some school dropouts who might have by luck successfully acquired wealth entice those in school to drop learning or schooling in order to

try their luck in business or any wealth generating activities.

Sporting activities in recent times are generating a lot of money, praise and fame to the talented youth. Despite sporting activities being important in the life of the talented youth, it had a negative impact on pupils' education. Pupils especially those in school feel challenged and later abandon schooling for the sake of trying their luck in sports so that they may earn or get quick money rather than spend eight years in school and eventually fail to get wealth. They base their argument on what they read about or see their peers earning a living as a result of sporting activities. For instance, the knowledge that athletes control the economy of Eldoret town and own palatial buildings (Daily Nation, Dec 3rd.2011) would have influenced some pupils to abandon schooling.

The rate, at which pupils are abandoning education in public primary schools in Trans-Nzioa East, can be associated with peer pressure.

Related studies

Othuon et al (2006) in his study growing up and sexual maturation among the Luo of Kenya: removing the barriers to quality education, established that teachers were often using mother tongue in upper primary classes. This explains why Uwezo (2013) revealed that some pupils in class eight failed to read and understand class three passages either in English or in Kiswahili. They are the same teachers who punish pupils for failing to score high marks and even communicate fluently in English. The Kamunge report (1988 pg 13) recommended that 'teachers of the upper primary classes be assigned to teach only those subjects they studied and passes in the KCSE or equivalent'. There is a possibility that today 2014 teachers are allocated subjects as per the school head teacher's wish. Sila (2011) did a study on the influence of parenting styles on learner self-concept and academic performance in Kakamega East District in which he established that strict rules at home negatively affected the children's freedom of expression. To him the action made children to withdraw into themselves. It is reasonable therefore to apportion some blame to both teachers and pupils for contributing to school dropout rate.

Ali, (2000) carried out a research on wastage in primary schools and their implication for curriculum development in Marsabit District. In his findings, the need for dowry from girls and the boys' involvement in herding of animals affected the schools retention rates of students. However, this study did not identify the fact that large herds of animals kept by these nomadic families would have influenced the children to drop out of school. The argument is that the children feel that after all they would inherit part of their parent's wealth and thereafter

lead a successful life in future. To these types of children, education is a waste of time because it could not add any value into their life. This finding is in agreement with Vroom's expectancy theory of motivation, which asserts that an individual withdraws efforts in an action where he sees little success and instead redirect it to where he or she will succeed.

The research done by Task Force on student discipline and unrest in secondary school (Gok, 2001) reveals that boys looked down upon female students and teachers. Their behaviour was contrary to school moral codes hence it was one of the main causes of conflicts. The Task Force failed to link, the behaviour to the education received by boys during seclusion after initiation. Nairesiaie (2006) argues that girls got married off among the Maasai after undergoing initiation. She further notes that the initiates especially boys tend to be in conflict with colleagues who are uncircumcised as well as teachers. Therefore, it is from this basis that the current study would want to establish if initiation rite and its related teachings influences dropout rate among pupils in primary schools.

Mwabi, (2010) carried out a study on fishing activities and its influence on absenteeism in Budalangi Division, Busia District. It was established that, poverty level among households pushed pupils to fishing either in order to raise some user money for school fees or to sustain their families. However, fishing is one of the lucrative activities that generate enough money to educate the children. If, families in Budalangi get their resources from fishing activities, then primary school dropout cannot be associated with it. Fishing raises the affordability level of households. In Argentina (www.ipsnews.net/), accessed 10th Nov.2013 it was established that, poverty no longer explained school dropout rates. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that people in Trans-Nzoia East perceive education to be of little or no value to their children.

Yungungu, (2005) and Mbutita, (2008) on their study on a girl-child education focused more on the society's view of the education of the girl-child among the Kalenjin and Luo communities respectively. The findings of the studies revealed that a girl was denied or offered little education on the strength that she would be taken care off in life by a husband or a man. The research however did not identify factors inside the girl herself that influences her not to complete schooling. The girl-child being a product of culture assumes that once she gets pregnant then that is the end of schooling whether the society or parents preferred her to continue with education.

In a study done by Poipoi,(1999) on teachers' and students' perception of causes of bullying in secondary schools in Bungoma district, he identified bullying as one of the factors that disorient a student, leading to lowering of his or her self-esteem and negative peer relation. The study dwelled more on causes of bullying and its

psychological effects, However, bullying to a certain extend influence pupils to drop out of school because it causes physical as well as psychological injuries to the victim. This study would want to establish if bullying exist and extend to which this vice affects pupils in Trans-Nzoia East to drop out of primary schools.

Mutai (2010) carried out a research on social, cultural, economic and school based factors that influence the rate of girls' dropout in Keiyo division. She found out that male teachers and boys sexually harassed girls. The displeasure by girls was expressed through dropping out of school. Sexual harassment in whatever form it demoralises pupils whether boys or girls, hence it influences the rate at which pupils drop out of school. The affected pupils in most cases are girls and to a lesser extend boys.

A study carried out by Opanda (2010) on school physical facilities and pupils' school attendants choice: a case of public primary schools in Likuyani division, Lugari district established that primary schools with enough physical facilities attracted pupils. Hence, these schools were preferred choice of pupils. Opanda found out that those schools without enough physical facilities such as those having worn out roofs and floors exposed pupils to danger of being attacked by jiggers or being rained on among others. However, the study fell short of informing the reader similar factors also influence pupils to drop out of public primary schools in Trans-Nzoia- East. Some of public primary schools in Trans-Nzoia East are in pathetic conditions. However, this study failed to disclose that having physical facilities of such conditions failed to meet the threshold of gender sensitivity among pupils. Further, Too (2007) and Uwezo (2012) established that physical conditions of the school played a major role in girls' dropout. When schools lack gender friendly toilets, desks and even sanitary towels girls tend to slowly shy off and finally opt to discontinue schooling. The current study would want to establish if these conditions discussed are similar in public primary schools in Trans-Nzoia East.

Yungungu (2005), Nairesiae, (2006), Mbutita (2008), and Mutai (2010) identify parents' related factors influencing girls to drop out of school or fail to acquire education. These studies found out that most girls were withdrawn from school mainly to generate wealth through dowry and helping in domestic work. Though these studies demonstrate clearly how parents divert the attention of children from schooling, there could be a new trend emerging today where children are looking for money with their parents' consent or without their knowledge.

The study done by Muganda (1997) on the effects of girls dropping out of secondary schools in Shinyalu, Kakamega district indicated that girls who had successfully completed school were not in gainful employment. This had a negative effect on those girls who wanted to rejoin schools. Whether one was in school or not there were no employment opportunities.

Therefore, to rejoin school was perceived to be a waste of time and resources. Further, the peers tease and taunt a girl once rumour of pregnancy start circulating. This leaves the girl with emotional scars as established by Achoka and Njeru (2011). The idea of lack of employment opportunities and negative handling negatively influences a pupil to drop out school.

RESEARCH, DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter is concerned with the procedures and methods that the researcher employed in order to obtain data that is relevant for the study. The chapter consists of a description of the study area, research design, study population, sampling techniques, data collection instruments and procedures, methods of data analysis and interpretation.

Research Design

The study adopted the Ex-post facto research survey, which means 'after the fact'. This is a design in which independent variable or variables have already occurred and in which the researcher starts with dependent variable or variables in retrospect for their possible relationship to and effects on the dependent variable Chieni (1995) as cited by Ngigi (2007). In effect, the researcher asks himself what factors seem to be associated with certain occurrences, conditions or aspects of behaviour. The Ex-post facto research design is appropriate as it deals with a phenomenon whose manifestation has already occurred, or is inherently not manipulable (ibid). The factors influencing primary pupils' dropout are already in existence and cannot be changed overnight or suddenly. The study was done after the pupils had already dropped out of school.

However, the Ex-post facto design has limitations like inability to manipulate independent variables and the risk of improper interpretation of results (Kothari, 1993). From the above, the research was very cautious in interpreting the results of the study in order to avoid including the influence of other variables other than those under study. The study attempted to understand, describe and explain possible causal factors linked to pupils dropping out of public primary schools in Trans-Nzoia East, Trans-Nzoia County by observing the existing data in schools as well as those provided by class teachers and head teachers.

The research methodology was mixed meaning that both qualitative and quantitative research methods were adopted. Under quantitative method, the study used numerals in finding and describing data, while under qualitative the researcher collected information, analysed and interpreted according to the objectives of this study.

Study area

The study area Trans Nzoia East is part of former Trans-Nzoia district now Trans-Nzoia County. It is located in the former Rift Valley Province. Trans-Nzoia County borders the Republic of Uganda to the North West, and the following counties; West Pokot to the North, Elgeyo Marakwet to the East, Uasin- Gishu and Kakamega to the South, and Bungoma to the West and South West respectively. However, the actual study area is found to the East of Kitale town and borders Marakwet to the East, Kwana to the North and Trans-Nzoia West to the South. The area has a good climate and arable land.

Most public primary schools in this area are mixed in nature, having both boys and girls. Therefore, the research findings shall apply to both boys and girls. The area has approximately 82 primary schools scattered all over that offer full primary education of eight years. The schools are divided into five educational zones namely Ngonyek, Chepsiro, Kachibora. Makutano, and Kipsaina.

Ali (2000) carried out a research in Arid and Semi-Arid region of Marsabit District on Wastage in primary school education and their implication for curriculum development. He recommended that a similar one could be carried out elsewhere possibly in regions that have different climatic conditions. Therefore, carrying out a research in Trans-Nzoia East befit the recommendation made by Ali. Trans-Nzoia has wet and cold weather conditions with an interval of short dry seasons.

The researcher was disturbed by remarks made by educators, teachers in particular about the high rate of pupils dropping out of school. The area in recent times had experienced an increase in crime rate that is closely associated with school dropouts. Most of the children who are supposed to be in school are engaged in petty business, idling around or are employed as domestic workers. This scenario attracted the attention of the researcher to find out to why the youth were not in school. Furthermore, classroom teachers confided in the researcher that head teachers of public primary schools filed statistics with the education offices that reflected the wish of the government. In that, it shows a decrease in school dropout rate though contrary to what actually happens in schools. The teachers' assertion means that dropout rate was increasing annually within schools of Trans-Nzoia East. Besides, Uwezo (2011) discovered that 57.97% pupils were present on day of their visit while 4/10 pupils miss school daily in this area. The finding by Uwezo indicates that the problem of school dropout is real. Though the study dwelled more on absenteeism it fell short of informing us that the same are some of the symptoms of school dropout. In selecting the area, the researcher aims at finding the truth of the matter on pupils' dropout in public primary schools in Trans-Nzoia East.

Table 2. A summary of sample for the study

Educational zone	No. of schools	30% of schools	No. of teachers
i) Ngonyek	24	7	28
ii) Chepsiro	16	5	20
iii) Kachibora	16	5	20
iv) Makutano	12	4	16
v) Kipsaina	14	4	16
Total	82	25	100

Study population

The target population was 250 teachers. However, the sample population included 3 teachers randomly selected from classes six; seven and eight giving a total of 3 teachers in each of the 25 randomly selected public primary schools. Further, 1 Head teacher was automatically selected from each of the 25 public primary schools, giving a total of 100 respondents.

Sampling design and sample size

The researcher used 30% schools from a total of 82 public primary schools that offer full primary education. Stratified sampling was used. Kothari (1985) argues that if a population from which a sample is to be drawn does not constitute a homogeneous group, stratified sampling is applied in order to obtain a representative sample. The method therefore allows different groups to be represented in the sample. Trans-Nzoia East was divided into 5 zones namely Ngonyek, Chepsiro, Kachibora, Makutano and Kipsaina. These zones have each twenty four (24), sixteen (16), sixteen (16), twelve (12), and fourteen (14) schools respectively. Simple random sampling was used in selection of twenty five (25) schools that were included in the study. Simple random sampling ensures that research data can be generalized to a larger population (Creswell, 2009). Besides, all the individuals in a sample frame have equal chance of being selected in the study. For instance, the researcher wrote names of all 25 public primary schools in Ngonyek Zone then folded and placed them in a container. The pieces were then thoroughly mixed after which one person assisted in picking only seven (7) schools that formed subjects that were included in the study for that zone. The process was applied to all the remaining 4 zones. This gave a total of 25 public primary schools. Thereafter, simple random sampling was also used in the selection of three class teachers from classes six, seven, and eight in each school who were included in the study, giving an overall total of 75 respondents in this category.

One head teacher from each of the 25 sampled public primary schools was automatically selected giving a total

of 25 respondents. In total 100 respondents were selected for the study as indicated in Table 2.

Data collection instruments

This study utilized questionnaire, observation schedule and interview schedule in data collection.

Questionnaires

Questionnaires are research instruments that gather data over a large sample (Kisilu and Tromp, 2006). The questionnaire was a convenient tool for the study because it enabled the researcher to gather information from a large number of subjects within a short time and with little costs. It facilitates easy and quick acquisition of information. The instrument also gave respondents adequate time to give well thought-out and researched answers. The research utilized closed ended questions. The questionnaires were administered to class teachers. The questionnaire covered and prosecuted background information of respondents and each of the study objectives as listed in chapter one of this paper. A Likert scale comprising of 5 response categories as demonstrated below was applied that required participants to rate the items based on; Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree and Strongly agree. The questionnaire was divided into five sections as per the study objectives.

Observation schedule

Kothari (1990) argues that observation is the most commonly used methods in studies relating to behavioural sciences. Under this method, information is sought by the investigators' own direct observation without asking from the respondent. It generates information from the researchers' point of view (Binnet, 2003) as quoted by Mbutita, (2008). The instrument also provides current information and is useful in exploiting topics that may be uncomfortable for respondents to discuss (Creswell, 2009). Observation method assisted

the researcher to counter check the information given by the respondents. The researcher utilized an observation checklist to record the condition of school structures and facilities. Methods of punishments were noted and medium of communication among pupils.

Interview schedule

An interview is the oral administration of a questionnaire (Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999). It is a face-to-face encounter. Interviews are advantageous in that they provide in-depth and accurate data that is not possible to get using questionnaires. Besides, it is the main tool that can extract very sensitive and personal information. Creswell (2009) further explains that an interview allows the researcher control over the line of questioning. It means that the respondent can be controlled to avoid irrelevant information. Both structured and unstructured methods of interviewing were applied in order to get in-depth information about the variables of the study. Interviews were administered to head teachers because they were people who handled daily cases related to pupils' behaviour change. An interview was used because it enabled the researcher to counter check with information provided by questionnaires. During the interview, the researcher jotted down the information given, besides audiotaping the interview and later on transcribed it. This method enabled the researcher to probe the respondents for further clarification whenever information provided was deemed not clear.

Validity of the research instruments

Validity refers to the accuracy and meaningful of inferences, which are based on the results of a research (Mugenda and Mugenda (1999). It is the degree to which results obtained from the analysis of the data actually represent the phenomena under study. Validity therefore has to do with how accurately the data obtained in the study represents the variables of the study objectives. The content validity of the instruments was therefore obtained by the researcher discussing the items in the instruments with University supervisors, other lecturers in the department of Curriculum, Instruction and Educational Media, Moi University and colleagues. The advice given by these people helped the researcher improve the validity of the research instruments.

Further to ensure that the research instruments draws the relevant information a pilot study was carried out in the neighbouring Trans-Nzoia West district that has similar characteristics with the actual district of the study. The discrepancies that were detected enabled the researcher to adjust and rectify the research instruments.

Reliability of the research instruments

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) reliability is a measure of the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results or data after repeated trials. Piloting of the questionnaire was done in order to ensure that the items detected kind of responses the researcher intended to get. That they were acceptable in terms of content and covered all aspects of the study that the researcher wished to explore. According to (Kothari, 2004) a pilot study is a smaller version of a proposed study, which is conducted to develop or refine the methodology. The neighbouring Trans-Nzoia west district was used for piloting. The process was used in order to get two sets of interval data that was used to calculate reliability coefficient. The Pearson's Product Moment formula for the Test-retest was employed to compute the correlation coefficient in order to establish the extent to which the content of the questionnaires were consistent in enlisting the same responses every time the instrument was administered. A correlation coefficient of 0.75 was arrived at which was considered high enough to be accepted as a reliable measure of internal consistency of questionnaire items (Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999). The feedback obtained from the pilot study assisted the researcher in revising the questionnaire to ensure that it covered the objectives of the study.

Data collection procedures

An introductory letter from the School of Education Moi University was sought before proceeding to the Ministry of Education for a permit to undertake a field study in public primary schools in Trans-Nzoia East. Thereafter a research permit was obtained from the offices of deputy county commissioner and sub-county education offices respectively. The researcher made prior visits to selected schools and fixed appointments with schools' administration. This facilitated arrangements and allocation of adequate time for distribution of data collection instruments for data collection. The researcher administered questionnaires to class teachers and interview schedule were administered to head teachers using interview items like tape recorder, and notebook. Observation schedule was applied to ascertain the information given by the respondents.

The research tools were self administered, meaning, that the researcher distributed and collected the filled in questionnaires. 100% questionnaires were obtained after making several reminders to some of the respondents who proved to be sluggish in handing them back.

Ethical considerations

The researcher explained to the respondents the import-

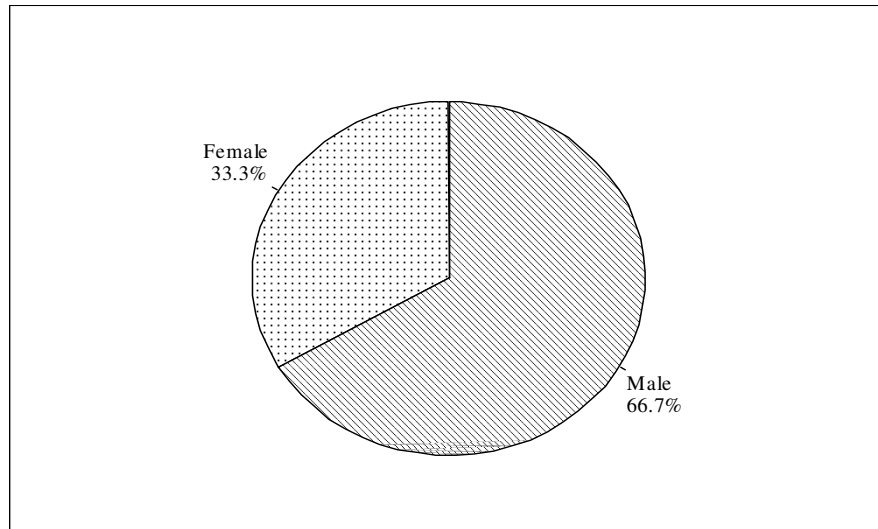


Figure 1. Gender of the Teachers interviewed

ance of the study so that they could give relevant information. The respondents were assured of confidentiality of the information given. However, respondents were told that the outcome of the research would be disseminated to the offices of deputy county commissioner and sub-county education office respectively. To avoid suspicion from respondents the researcher established a rapport with them. Time was put into consideration and the researcher stuck to agreed schedules with respondents in order to avoid inconveniences. Voluntary participation by the respondents was encouraged.

Methods of data presentation and analysis

The data collected was crosschecked to facilitate coding, tabulation and then drawing of statistical inferences. Descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentages were utilised. Presentation was in statistical tables and pie charts. The statistical package for the social sciences programme (SPSS) was used to analyse data.

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This chapter presents the results of the study conducted on the Teachers' perceptions on the factors that influence school dropouts among upper primary school pupils in Trans-Nzoia East, Trans-Nzoia County, Kenya. The study set out to answer the following objectives;

i. To establish teachers' perception on ways in which cultural practices influence school dropout among upper primary school pupils.

ii. To find out teachers' perception on how insecurity influence school dropout among upper primary school pupils.

iii. To determine teachers' perception on how pupils family background influence school dropout among upper primary school pupils.

iv. To find out teachers' perception on ways in which peer pressure influence school dropout among upper primary school pupils.

All 75 questionnaires for teachers and interview schedules were administered, giving a response rate of 100%. This was because the researcher administered the instruments personally. Descriptive statistics were mainly used in analysing data; statistical package for the social science (SPSS) on computer was used. The results were presented in form of frequencies, percentages and pie charts. This chapter presents the data and corresponding analysis, the interpretation of the analysis and the discussion of the results.

Demographic information

The researcher sought to establish the general information about the respondents, which formed the basis under which the interpretations were made. It sought to establish their gender, professional qualification, and duration of work of the teachers sampled. The findings were presented in the figures below.

Majority of the respondents were males (66.7%) while the rest 33.3% were females (Figure 1). This implies that culture may have influenced the female teachers to opt to teach lower primary classes due to the fact that upper classes comprised unmanaged troublesome boys. In a

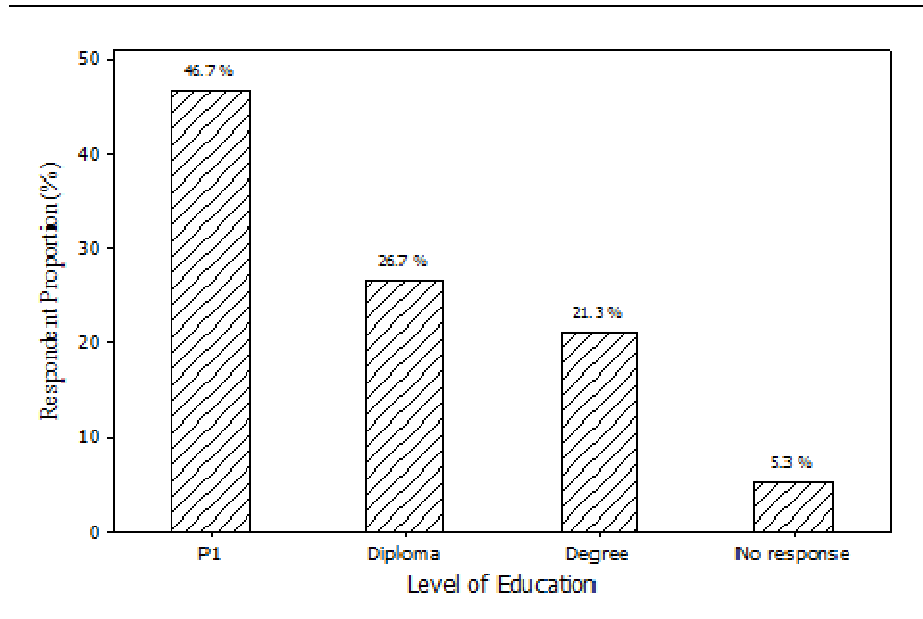


Figure 2. Highest Level of Education attained by the Respondents

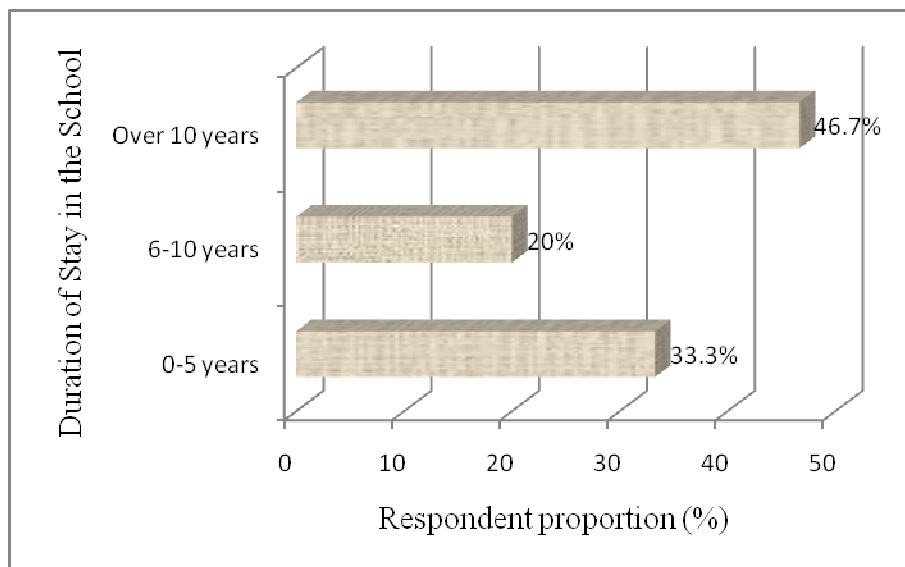


Figure 3. Respondents' duration of stay in the school.

research done by Chisikwa, (2011) it was established that 24% of female teachers in Vihiga District sought for and were appointed head teachers. The rest 76% rejected because the schools were located in the interior and cultural attachment to leadership where it was believed among the Maragoli a sub-tribe among the Luhya that leadership was a preserve for males. The low percentage of female teachers sampled for the study as indicated in figure 1 reflects the cultural perceptions held about females or girls.

Highest Level of Education

Figure 2 above shows the highest level of education of those who participated in this study. The largest proportion of the respondents (46.7%) was P1 teachers. This high percentage was expected because the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) previously had been employing P1 teachers in public primary schools. The next group of teachers had Diploma qualification (26.7%). The rest (21.3%) were Degree holders.

Table 3. Language and Language problems in schools

Variables	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
i.Official language of communication	English	55	73.3%
	Kiswahili	14	18.7%
	Vernacular	0	0
ii.Allowed to use another language	English and Kiswahili	6	8%
	Allowed	63	84%
	Not allowed	10	13.3
iii.Find difficulties in using official language	No Response	2	2.7%
	Find difficulties	57	76%
	Do not find difficulties	18	24%

The figure 2 implies that a majority of the teachers in this area are highly qualified therefore were in a position to state factors that influenced pupils to drop out of school. However, there could be a tendency among teachers with higher education qualification to migrate to secondary schools or other sectors of economy. Sergiovanni (1993. pg 78), says that 'what is good gets done'. Teachers could have been associating teaching profession with low pay basing on the recent high rate of teachers' strikes over low remunerations. It also points out that we are dealing with teachers who are highly demotivated or demoralised which could be a factor contributing to pupils' dropout rate.

Duration of Stay in School

The teachers who participated in the study were found to have taken some time in the area of study. A majority 46.7% had stayed in the area of study for over ten years while 33.3% had taken five years and below (Figure 3). The rest 20% had worked in the area between 6-10 years. This implies that a majority of the teachers who participated in the study had enough experience with pupils' behavioural patterns and were in a position to authoritatively explain factors influencing their pupils to drop out of school within the area of study.

A trend is emerging whereby the newly posted teachers (33.3%) are taking over upper classes in primary schools in this region compared to (20%) who had taken 6-10 years. This would also explain the reason why drop out rate may be increasing. Pupils drop out of school because of failure to cope up with these new teachers. Teachers vary in styles of instruction hence it could have negatively affected performance levels leading to dropout.

Cultural Practises and their influence on School dropout

Language

Table 3 indicates (73.3%) of the respondents reported

that the official language of communication in their schools was English. Another (18.7%) said the official language is Kiswahili and none said they use vernacular as the official language of communication.

When asked whether the pupils were allowed to use any other language other than the official language, 84% said yes while 13.3% said their students were not allowed to use any other language. About 76% of the respondents agreed that their pupils found it difficult to communicate using the official language while the remaining 24% said that their pupils used the official language with ease.

It is evident that English language which is the main media of communication in Kenya pose a serious problem to upper primary pupils. Only (24%) could use it with ease. The Kenya National Examinational Council (KNEC) audit report reveals a serious language problems ailing candidates. The report established that the KCPE 2012 candidates could hardly write simple words in English correctly (Daily Nation Oct.1st.2013).

To measure pupils' satisfaction in the use of languages at their disposal the researcher used likert scale 1-Extremely Dissatisfied. 2-Dissatisfied. 3-Neutral. 4-Satisfied. 5-Extremely Satisfied. The languages examined during this study included Mother tongue, Kiswahili, English and a combination of the three languages. For purposes of analysis, Extremely Dissatisfied and Dissatisfied were combined forming Dissatisfied same to Satisfied and Extremely Satisfied were combined forming Satisfied.

On Mother tongue, it was established that 45.3% of the teachers were of the opinion that pupils were satisfied using Mother tongue. Teachers who were of the opinion that the students were dissatisfied accounted for 26.7%.

Figure 4 demonstrate that though Trans-Nzoia East is a cosmopolitan area mother tongue was still strong. This would be associated with the education policy of using MT as media of instruction in Early Child Development Education (ECDE) classes. The emphasis on the use of English language in upper primary classes would have negatively affected pupils' understanding. It therefore made learning difficult for them. On Kiswahili, a majority of the teachers 77.3% were of the opinion that pupils are satisfied in using Kiswahili language in school. This

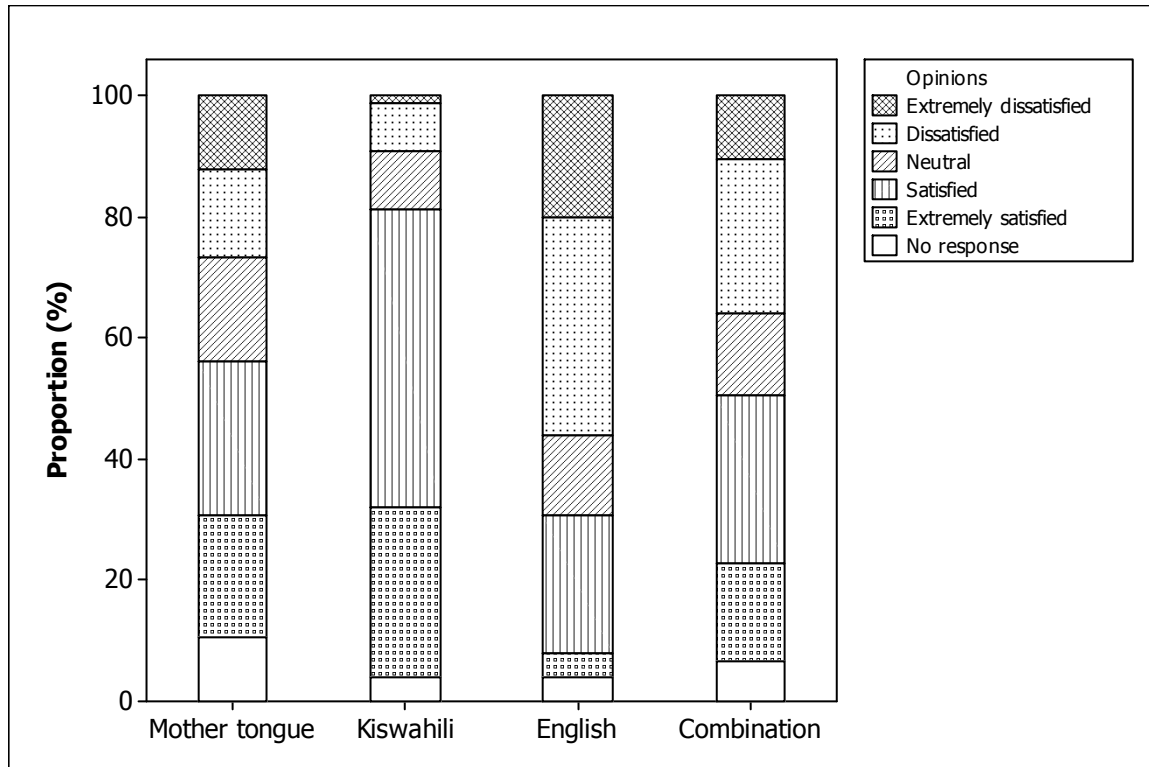


Figure 4. Teachers perception on pupils' satisfaction in use of various languages in school

depicts Kiswahili as pupils' favourite language. Only 9.3% were of a contrary opinion. In Trans-Nzoia East Kiswahili is presumed to be MT since it is a cosmopolitan area.

On English, the use of this language was perceived to be a bother to the pupils by the teachers sampled. It was established that 56% of the respondents were of the opinion that their pupils were dissatisfied in using English. Those who thought that pupils were satisfied were 26.7%. Though English language is the main media of communication and examination, it was established that English was the most unpopular language among upper primary pupils in the area.

On combination of Languages, while examining student satisfaction in using all the above three languages, teachers were divided down the middle with 44% of the opinion that pupils were satisfied whereas 46% were of the opinion that they were not. The 2% difference shows that pupils used both languages interchangeably though they somehow gave Kiswahili a preference.

Based on the above findings, it was established that the pupils' language of comfort was not English. The official language of communication in schools within trans-Nzoia East district according to the teachers was English but only 26.7% of the participants thought their pupils were comfortable in using English language. The situation was probably part of the reason for high school

drop out within the study area. Urevbu (1985) in his study found that discomfort in language of instruction among pupils caused dropout rate as they felt there was no bond between school and home environment. As indicated by a research of KNEC (Daily Nation Oct. 1st.2013) a strong Mother Tongue and 'Sheng' influence was detected as problems ailing the candidates. Spelling mistakes were staring in most write-ups hence they could hardly communicate anything. The findings of KNEC are supported by Uwezo Report about Literacy and Numeracy level of pupils in classes 1-2 last year 2012 (Uwezo Kenya,2013). The study revealed that some standard eight pupils could not read a standard three level passage in English and in Kiswahili.

According to the head teachers interviewed, most schools laid more emphasis on the use of English especially to upper primary section. To ensure that pupils used English, one head teacher said 'in my school pupils in upper classes are forced to speak English four days a week'. When pressed to enumerate ways of ensuring that pupils upheld the language policy she said that 'we have introduced a 'Disk' that is used to circulate among those who do not use English in communication. The effects of handling a 'Disk' were one was given corporal punishment, delayed to go home in the evening, forced to read a story book(s) for a long period, humiliated before an assembly or in front of a class.

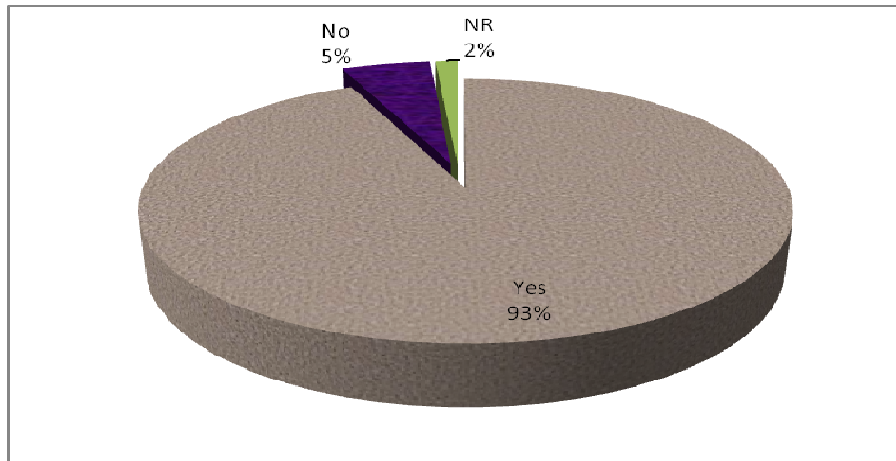


Figure 5. Teacher's opinion as to whether initiation alters pupils' behaviour

Table 4. Teachers perception on perceived behaviour changes among pupils

Variable	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		No Response	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
i)Boys underrate female teachers	21	28	19	25.3	9	12	15	20	8	10.7	3	4
ii)Pupils do not report back to school	9	12	13	17.3	9	12	25	33.3	18	24	1	1.4
iii)Fighting among pupils increase	10	13.3	29	38.7	10	13.3	12	16	13	17.3	1	1.4
iv)Boys approach girls for love	15	20	18	24	14	18.7	15	20	11	14.6	2	2.7
v)Initiates refuse to be punished	19	25.3	26	34.7	13	17.3	10	13.3	7	9.4	0	0

Most pupils found these as inhuman treatment and lowering their dignity. The pupils may have opted to stay away from schools in order to protect their self-esteem. The practice is contrary to what Kochhar (1992 p, 36) said 'the teacher should be witty, never sarcastic, critical or discouraging. Pupils like to be recognised, and approved by their fellow beings in order to feel that they have a place in the classes. The interview further revealed that on the said English speaking days the head teachers noted an abnormal quietness and reduced volume of noise in school, which was a contrast to Kiswahili speaking days. The indicators of stress are high level of sickness, absenteeism, reduced productivity, and increased number of internal conflicts between individuals (Kiminyo, 1992; Cole, 2002, Muchinsky, 2007). This study reveals that pupils in Trans-Nzoia East were emotionally disturbed hence; they failed to learn efficiently which subsequently resulted in school dropout. The finding of the study concurs with Vroom's theory that an individual will not be motivated to do a particular job if it is unattainable. In this case, use of English is unattainable. The home environment allows pupils'

leeway of enjoying the freedom of speaking Kiswahili language or combination of languages as revealed by 77% and 44% respondents respectively as indicated in figure 4.

The study established that emphasis on English usage and its accompanying punishment influenced pupils to drop out of school.

Initiation rites

The teachers were further interviewed on the influence of initiation rites on school pupils. Almost all of the respondents (93%) were of the opinion that initiation rites alter the behaviour of pupils in their schools. Another 5% were of a contrary opinion as demonstrated in figure 5 below.

For purposes of analysis, Strongly Agree and Agree were combined to form Agree, while Strongly Disagree and Disagree were combined forming Disagree.

Table 4 shows the teachers perceptions on various behaviour changes related to initiation rites. From the

table it was established that 53.3 % of the teachers supported the perception that boys tend to underrate female teachers after undergoing initiation while 30.7% disagreed with the statement.

While examining the behaviour of not reporting to school after initiation, 29.3% of the teachers supported this statement. The teachers who thought the statement was not true accounted for 57.3% that was more than those who concurred with the statement.

The teachers were also asked of their opinions on increase in fighting among pupils after initiation. The results showed that 52% agreed with the statement. However, 33.3% gave a contrary opinion. In this case, it was established that inter-pupils conflicts were a common phenomenon in schools.

On the statement that boys after initiation actively approach girls for love, 44% of the teachers agreed. Those who deferred with the opinion were 34.6%. It was thus clear that more teachers were of the opinion that some boys after initiation were more sexually active consequently, they approached girls for love using every means available.

Majority of the teachers (60%) agreed that after initiation some pupils refused any form of punishment. Those who deferred with statement were 22.7%. The teachers revealed that any form of punishment was unacceptable by these boys after undergoing initiation.

This study reveals that initiation rites in Trans-Nzoia East transform pupils especially boys who were initially law abiding, respectful and obedient individuals to school authorities into resentful and overbearing individuals to both fellow pupils and teachers. An overwhelming number (93.3%) of teachers sampled supported this view. An interview with school head teachers showed that the initiated boys who were formerly disciplined suddenly changed in behaviours. The behaviour displayed was constantly in collision with prefects and teachers especially when enforcing school rules and regulations. One head teacher (Wanjiru, not her name) lamented that during the period of seclusion the initiates were informed about cultural definition of the roles and rules of a man and woman. She said; "circumcision is used to enhance manliness by creating a dominant and aggressive image of a man".

The culture identifies womanly duties as; house cleaning, home maintenance, fetching water and obeying a man. One head teacher (Kwarula, not his name) said that one of the community's cultures defines a woman as a 'kid' who is supposed to be controlled and supervised by a man. The director of basic education Ms Rotich noted with concern that Murranism was a cultural practice that affected smooth learning process (Mbiti, 1973, *The Standard*, 17th.Dec.2012). The head teacher further noted that in seclusion the instructors who facilitate training of initiates are people with questionable or failed moral standards. The troublesome behaviour displayed was acquired during seclusion period. Upon graduation the

pupils especially boys look down upon female 'kids' teachers. The female teachers are supposed to take orders from these pupils.

The training that the initiates undergo makes them to segregate or interpret themselves as superior that is why 52% of the respondents agree with the statement on increase in cases of fighting. Most head teachers said bullying was a common phenomenon. Rono (2010, pg 17) asserts that, "...boys consider all women including their mothers and lady teachers as inferior or simply children who should never have any control over them, let alone punish them. At times initiated Maasai boys react violently towards women teachers who punish them..."

These behaviours meant that the weak and the vulnerable pupils were bound to drop out of school because there was no guarantee for their safety Poipoi, (2011). The argument that boys tend to seek love relationships with girls (44%) of respondents concurred, may be the cause of worry among girls pupils coupled with bullying in schools. They are such behaviours that make schools insecure places. *The Standard* (Feb, 20th.2008. pg6) in her commentary noted that;

What sends chill down the spine of many parents is the realisation that school managers have lost control and cannot stop bullying and other unbecoming behaviour that threatens to turn schools into death camps. The truth is that bullying in schools goes on unabated and appears unstoppable.

When schools are no longer safe, the vulnerable pupils withdraw from them (Rono, 2010).

The table 4 above further indicates that 52% of the respondents said pupils preferred to be out of school than be punished more so by female teachers. The argument is that female teachers are of low status to initiated boys (ibid). Other studies on the same issue elsewhere found similar results (Abagi and Odipo, 1997). A teacher called Musili, (not real name) said in an interview.

"Pupils after initiation think they are already adults and prefer to stay out of school rather than be punished by teachers. In fact most of them run away from school if they learn of a punishment".

Teenage Pregnancy

Out of the 75 teachers interviewed, 64 (85.3%) teachers said there had been cases of pregnancies in their classes while 11(14.7%) did not have any cases of pregnancy. Figure 6 shows pregnancy cases.

Out of these, a majority (61.3%) said there were a few cases of 1-2 individuals in their classes while, 18.7% confirmed that they were affected with about 3-4 cases and 5.3% said they had over 5 cases (Figure 7).

This study establishes that girls got pregnant as early as class six and even lower. Schools in this area begins to loose girls as from standard six or even lower.

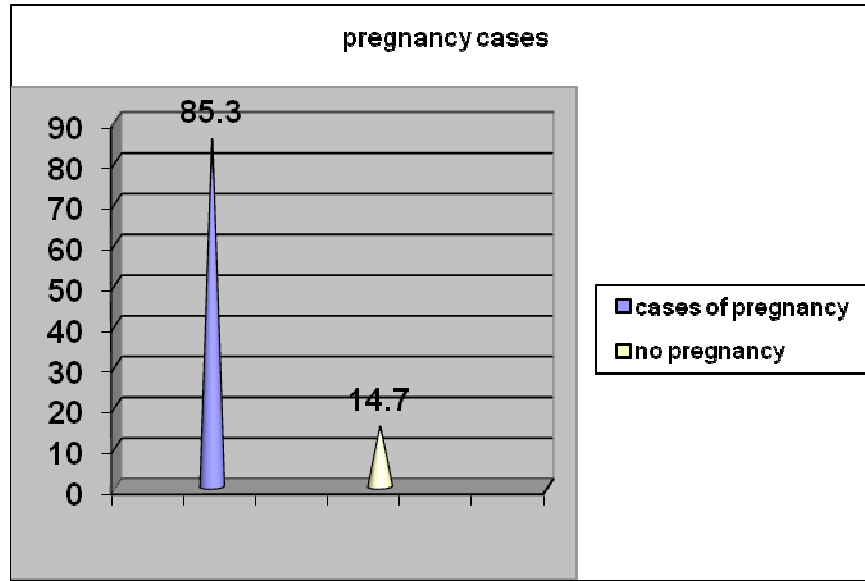


Figure 6. Teachers response on pregnancy cases

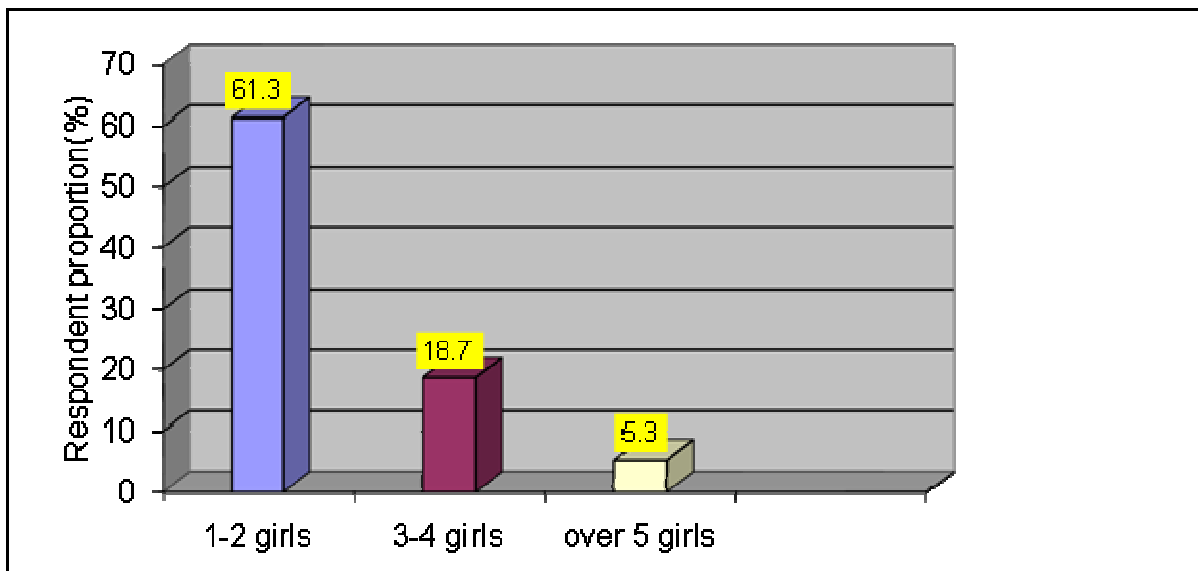


Figure 7. Teachers' response on previous number of pregnancy cases in their classes

Therefore, it means that by the time they reach class eight several girls would have dropped out (see figure 6). That is why 5.3% of respondents had experienced over than five girls getting pregnant. It also implies that pregnancy cases are common phenomena in public primary schools within Trans-Nzoia East.

The Standard (June, 25th.2013) reported two cases that surprised their respective area District children officers. About 18 girls of Chepkurkur in Mount Elgon and 5 girls of Cheplanget primary schools in Kericho had dropped out of school after they got pregnant

respectively. In an interview with head teachers, it was established that schools did not keep data on the number of girls who got pregnant and who had left to give birth. This revelation was in agreement with Osula, (2007) who found out that secondary schools in Embu municipality had failed to keep record of girls who became pregnant. This was done probably to prove to the public and Ministry of education that pregnancy cases were on the decrease trend.

The table 5 indicates possible reasons to why girls fail to seek re-admission after giving birth. Most teachers

Table 5. Teachers perceptions on factors hindering girls in seeking readmission after pregnancy

Variable	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
i)Family view - grown ups	13	17.3	20	26.7	18	24	16	21.3	8	10.7
ii)Humiliation, isolation	20	26.7	43	57.3	5	6.7	6	8	1	1.3
iii)Teachers fear	15	20	22	29.3	13	17.3	15	20	10	13.4
iv)Rules and regulations	3	4	9	12	4	5.3	18	24	41	54.7
v)Parental fear	7	9.3	23	30.7	15	20	24	32	6	8
vi)Cultural view	11	14.7	18	24	11	14.7	20	26.6	15	20
vii)Too much work for girls	10	13.3	21	28	10	13.3	19	25.4	15	20

(84%) agreed that these girls never sought readmission because they were afraid of humiliation and isolation from their peers and even teachers. While 9.3% of respondents did not accept the opinion.

On the statement, that teachers fear the affected girls would influence other girls who had not fallen victims of pregnancy 49.3% of the respondents concurred. Those who gave a dissenting voice were 33.3%. This therefore implied that teachers probably failed to track down the girls in order to encourage them to seek readmission to school.

On the statement that families view the girl as a grown up who would support herself 44% of the respondents accepted while, 32% of the respondents rejected it.

On examining, the statement that the affected girls found it hard to handle schoolwork and the baby; teachers were divided right in the middle with 41.3% concurring and 45.3% giving a dissenting opinion.

The fear by parents that the affected girl may get pregnant again in the event she is readmitted to school, 40% of teachers sampled agreed with the perception. Those who gave a contrary opinion accounted for 40%. However, teachers were divided down the middle on the statement.

The traditional belief that girls who gave birth while in school or at a younger age were disgrace and should be isolated from others was seen to play a role. Although 46.6% of the respondents did not support the statement, 38.7% did support.

Finally when asked whether school rules and regulations were too strict to allow girls who had given birth back to class, 78.7% disagreed. While 16% who agreed with the opinion.

This study establishes that low rate of girls seeking readmission to school was due to fear of humiliation and isolation from teachers as well as their peers. Table 5 indicates that 84% of the respondents held this view. Schools are no longer places where children can find happiness whether on the wrong or not. School head teachers have lost control of their stations (The Standard Feb. 20th, 2008). Girls in this category are aware that already they have made a mistake therefore, it would be

wrong for teachers and colleagues to continue revisiting the issue whether in public or in private. According to Kiminyo et al, (1992), emotions of a child rise if he or she is frustrated or humiliated by sarcasm, frowning at a pupil and laughing at a pupil in a derogatory manner. Further, an emotionally disturbed child cannot be expected to learn effectively. Most girls feel too stigmatised especially when the community blames them and the perpetrator goes unpunished (Plan Kenya Chapter, 2013). The girl feels that she would rather stay away than be exposed to ridicule. Consequently, victims of pregnancy value their character more than education, an opinion that agrees with Vroom's expectancy theory of motivation. Vroom argues that an outcome of an action either motivates or demoralises. In our case, the girl is traumatised and demoralised that is why she decides to drop out of school.

More importantly there is need to create a child-friendly atmosphere in schools. Murray (1994), postulates that adolescents highly depends upon one another for self-esteem, companionship, and intimacy. Girls who had given birth should be encouraged and accepted in order to build their self-esteem.

The interview with school head teachers revealed that a strict rather than not written rule on pregnancy was in place in schools. These strict and private conditions ensured that affected girls would find it difficult to seek readmission in her former school. Mrs. Barasa (not her name) a head teacher said, 'if I readmit her back what message am I sending to other girls? This is a threat that has the potential to set off an epidemic of immoral and promiscuous behaviour'. Some school head teachers noted that the only option was to advise the pregnant girl before her parents to seek an alternative school. Three problems are created here one that if the school is nearby, then the girl is forced to attend a school located far from her home. Basing on the findings of these study pupils in this area covered long distances of over 2 kilometres as shown in figure 8, and on foot a view that was supported by 96% of respondents. The girl has to grapple with pregnancy and long distances if she accepts the condition. Two, that if the girl preferred the school which was rejecting her on the strength of pregnancy

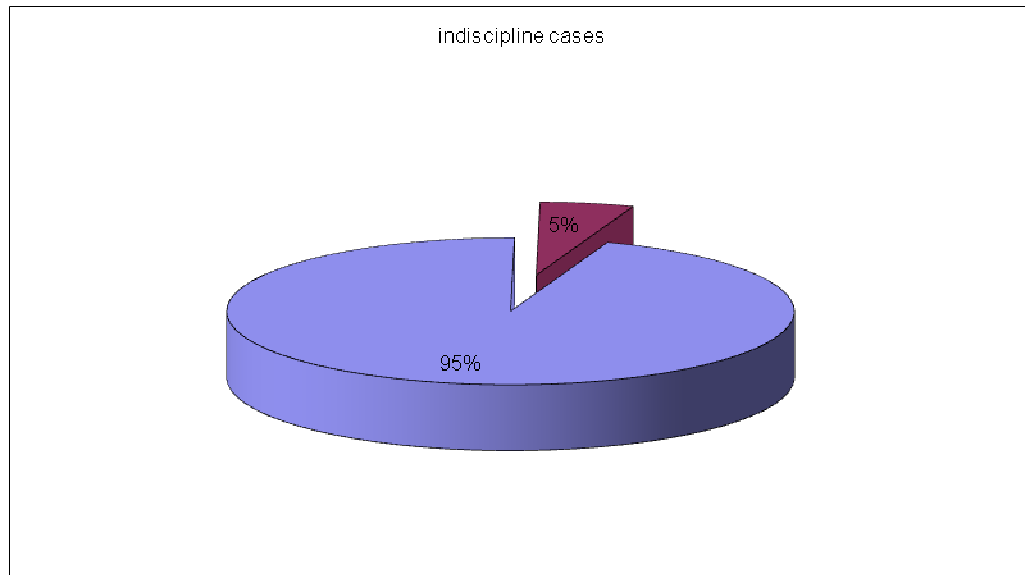


Figure 8. Teachers' perceptions on cases of in discipline
The Figure 8 indicates how pupils in the area of study were in disciplined

then learning no longer became her option. Saiyadain (2009) noted that whenever there is no well-formulated transfer policy it undoubtedly breeds a state of uncertainty among individuals. Finally, the teen-mother reconstructs her identity as that of a failure and looser in life (Achoka and Njeru, 2012) hence she becomes vulnerable to school dropout.

On further probe, head teachers said that they never sought to know whether the girls who had given birth went back to school or not, since it was none of their business. Osula (2007) was of the opinion that schools should track down girls who had given birth with an aim of encouraging them to seek for readmission to school. Plan Kenya Chapter (2013) noted that Kenya National School Health Policy encouraged and facilitated a return to school after giving birth. Therefore, teachers have moral as well as parental responsibility to follow-up and encourage the affected girls to continue with their education.

Security factors influencing school dropouts

Difficult conditions at school

For purposes of analysis the five point likert scale Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A) was combined forming Agree (A), Neutral (N) remained, and Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD) to Disagree(D).

Almost all the teachers who were interviewed (95%) were of the opinion that there were indiscipline cases among pupils in their classes while (5%) said no to the perception as indicated in the figure 8.

The perceptions of teachers on various types of indiscipline

Table 6 indicates that sexual harassment such as touching another without consent among pupils were not so much defined since (38.6%) of the respondents disagreed with the view. However, (32%) supported the statement.

Most of the teachers (84%) concurred with the statement that pupil engage in stealing one another's property. Another (6.6%) rejected the perception.

On the perception that pupils use abusive terms against each other (74.7%) of the respondents agreed while (16%) disagreed.

A significant portion of teachers (68%) disagreed while another (5.3%) agreed with the perception that pupils rape other pupils.

A significant large portion of respondents (76%) concurred compared to (18.7%) who disagreed with the perception that indicated that a good number of pupils engaged in fighting or bullying.

A significant portion of teachers (94.7%) said that pupils were not disciplined. This indicates that schools are no longer safe for the most vulnerable pupils. The Standard (Feb, 20th.2008) noted with concern that parents were apprehensive with the safety of their children because the school managements had lost control.

The findings of the study are in agreement with Poipoi, et al, (2010) who discovered that hazards in school environment such as physical bullying from fellow pupils played a role in lowering the victims' self-esteem.

Table 6 indicates that 84% of the respondents singled

Table 6. Teachers perceptions on existence of certain types of indiscipline among pupils

Variable	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
i)Sexual harassment	5	6.7	19	25.3	18	24	21	28	8	10.6
ii)Stealing property	22	29.3	41	54.7	3	4	4	5.3	1	1.3
iii)Abusive terms	24	32	32	42.7	3	4	10	13.3	2	2.7
iv)Rape	0	0	4	5.3	16	21.3	36	48	15	20
v)Fighting among pupils	27	36	30	40	0	0	11	14.7	3	4

out stealing, 76% physical fights and 74.7% abuses as common phenomenon in their respective schools. For the purposes of discussion, these indiscipline acts were treated as harassments. In studies by (Momanyi, 2009, Poipoi et al, 2010, Human rights Watch, 2013) it was found out that acts of physical fights ranging from slapping, whipping among others produced children with psychological problems. They go on to say, victims show signs of depression, withdrawal and anxiety. The Human rights watch (2013), pointed out that children often dropped out of schools because they had nobody to protect them or to turn to for protection. Others were afraid of retaliation from the aggressors in case a report was made to school authorities.

Poipoi, (ibid) cites verbal bullying which are characterised by negative comments about victims appearance, target of rumours and sexual comments impact negatively to the victims. This harassment (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/sexual-harrassment>) accessed on 20th.oct.2013, amount to degrading the victim and in a school situation one absentees himself or herself because he or she has low level of psychological abilities to cope. In case harassment is not controlled, the victim eventually decides to drop out of school. This study concurs with the findings of Murray (1994) that, children who experience problems with their peers are at risk of later life difficulties. He argues further that, teenagers would rather be alone than risk public humiliation. An environment that is oppressive make children to live in constant fear and anxiety (Sila, 2011).Therefore the current study finds this assertion by Sila true.

Forms of punishments applied in schools

The teachers were asked to pick forms of punishments that were applied to reform deviant upper primary pupils. A majority 48(64%) of the respondents forced pupils to run several rounds to a determined destination. Caning or corporal punishment attracted 38(50.7%) support.

However, other forms of punishments were humiliation in public by being made fun of 24(32%), while 20(26.7%) suspended their pupils from attending class lessons, another 18(24%) suspended pupils from school; the

remaining types of punishments were not popular with respondents as indicated in figure 9.

Caning was common in most schools visited. For instance, the researcher observed in one school where a teacher was administering corporal punishment to over 10 pupils just before they left for home in the evening. A similar practice was observed in some schools. Mass caning was done just after lunch and during games time. On inquiring about caning, one of the head teachers confidently showed the researcher a punch of sticks stocked in her office used for caning pupils. Though the class teachers said they forced pupils to run, most head teachers interviewed said caning was the most preferred form of punishment given to pupils. Mrs Rotich (not her real name) said 'I do cane; remember spare the rode spoil the child. Caning saves time wastage and is the most effective correctional method' in reference to a biblical verse.

International as well as National legislations have outlawed corporal and any forms of cruel and degrading punishment to students or people (UN, 1948, UNESCO, 2000. GoK, 2001. GoK, 2010). This could be the reason why teachers were changing tag. Instead of inflicting physical pain (corporal punishment), they force pupils to run around a given distance, going by 64% respondents who supported it as shown in figure 9. Other forms of punishment are gradually gathering momentum like public humiliation 32%, suspension from attending class lessons or school a perception supported by 32% and 26.7% respectively. In a research done by (ANPPCAN, 2000.Tikoko and Bomett, 2011), it was discovered that corporal punishment was associated with depression, low self-esteem and poor relationships with parents and other people. The condition impedes pupils' ability to learn and reason, feel lonely, sad, abandoned and angry. The current study agrees with the findings of ANPPCAN (2000).

The researcher observed how pupils who were caned reacted. Many pupils left for home crying, jumping up and down, and showing signs of being traumatised. Some pupils drop out of school because the cannot withstand such kind of humiliation and more so in public. This is done in order to avoid embarrassment before their potential girlfriends or peers, Tikoko and Bomett (ibid).

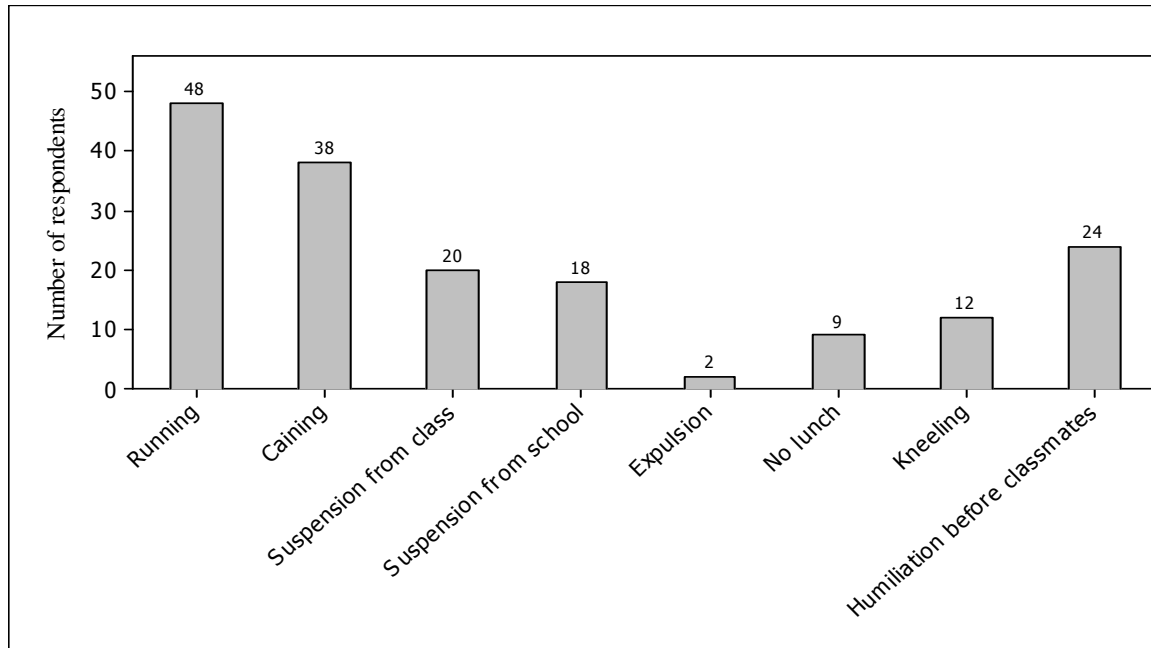


Figure 9. Teachers response on the kind of punishments they give pupils due to indiscipline

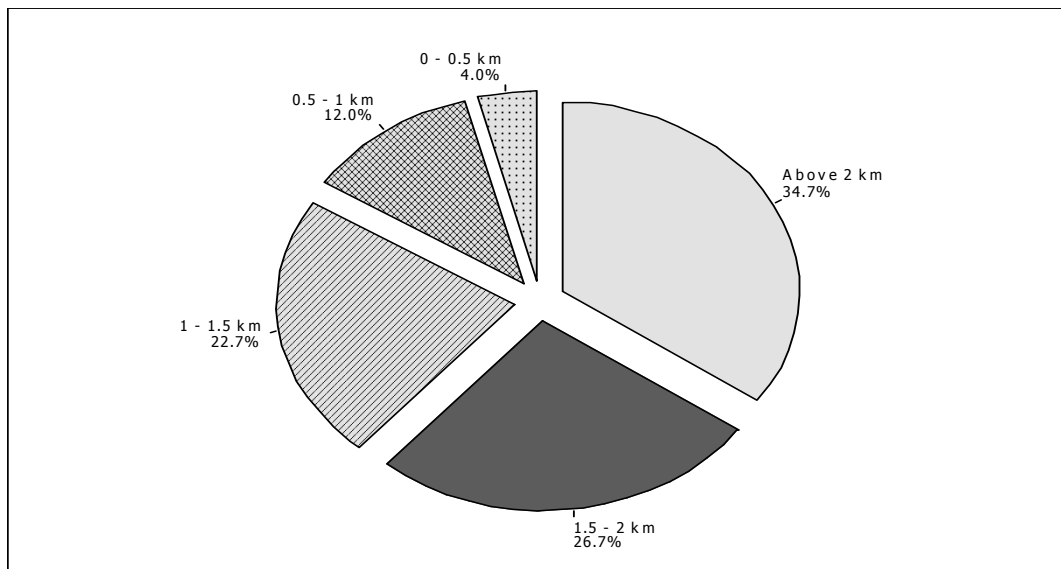


Figure 10. Teachers' opinion on distances travelled by pupils to school

This situation is worse in mixed schools where one would not want to be seen weak especially boys to girls or vice versa.

Distance to School

On the statement that sought to know if pupils travel long distances a majority of the respondents (94.7%) said yes

while the remaining (5.3%) gave a dissenting opinion. 34.7% of the respondents said pupils were drawn as far as 2 km and over. Another portion of 26.7% noted that most of their pupils are drawn within a range 2 kilometres and lesser away from the schools as shown in Figure 10. This implies that most schools are located within a range of three kilometres and over. Therefore, there are possibilities that pupils would spend around one hour or more depending on how one was fast to get to school or

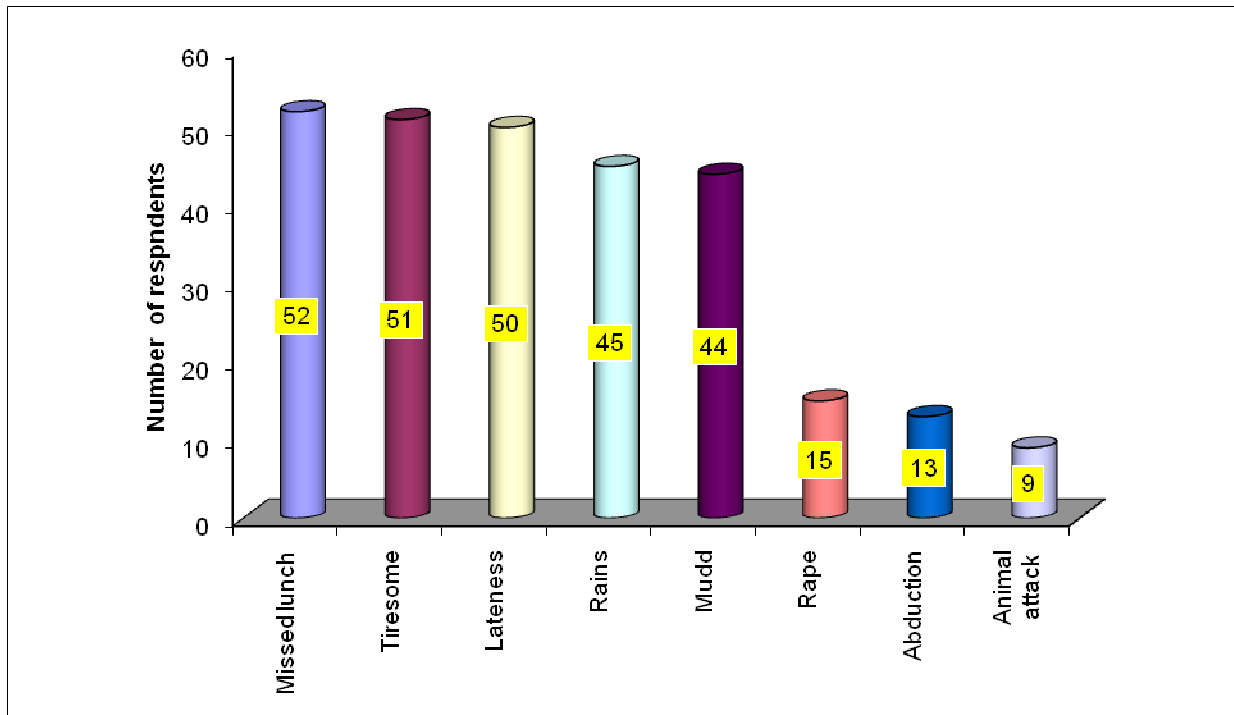


Figure 11. Perceived effects of long distances on pupils

home.

On the statement that sought to establish the main mode of transport used by pupils (96%) of the respondents said that they walk to and from school on foot and only (4%) use bicycles. This implies that most pupils walk to and from school daily on bare foot or on worn out shoes as observed by the researcher.

When asked whether the long distances were a contributing factor to pupils dropping out of school 56(74.7%) teachers said yes while only 19(25.3%) said no to that perception. The statement having 74.7% support from sampled teachers, implied that long distances posed a challenge to pupils' education.

Several factors arising from long distances are said to influence pupils to drop out of school. They are failure to go for lunch 52(69.3%), tiredness 51(68%), lateness 50(66.3%), wetness 45(60%), and getting soiled 44(58.7%) were identified by teachers as major problems that confronted upper primary pupils daily as indicated in Figure 11.

Researches have shown that long distances came with wide range of problems that affect the students. Ibrahim et al (2008) asserts that the longer the distance the higher the risk of dropping out. To him, urban pupils had lesser chances of dropping out than rural pupils did. The main reason was that schools in urban centres were closer to the child than most of rural schools in Uganda. Further, Jogero (2010) found out that poor performance in secondary schools in Kisumu municipality and eventual

student dropout was because of tiredness and lateness caused by long distances. Though the current study, agree with their findings, it further established that pupils in Trans-Nzoia East failed to get or go for lunch, and were exposed to bad weather conditions especially during wet seasons.

In an interview with head teachers, they said bad weather posed a big challenge on pupils' attendance. In one of the schools it was pointed out that in January 2013, the enrolment of class six was 160 pupils but at the time of research July 2013, only 132 pupils were present. The discrepancy noted was associated with wet season of April-August. Matters proved difficult due the fact that most pupils usually walk on bare foot covering a distance of over 6 kilometres daily both to and from school. This view was supported by 96% of respondents while only 4% were of the contrary opinion. Long distances and its related problems contribute immensely to demoralisation of pupils, given that high academic performance is also expected out of them.

Family Background that influences pupil dropout

Ability to Finance basic education

Results of this study reveal that most teachers (59.5%) were of the opinion that families in Trans-Nzoia East district were average in terms of their ability to finance the

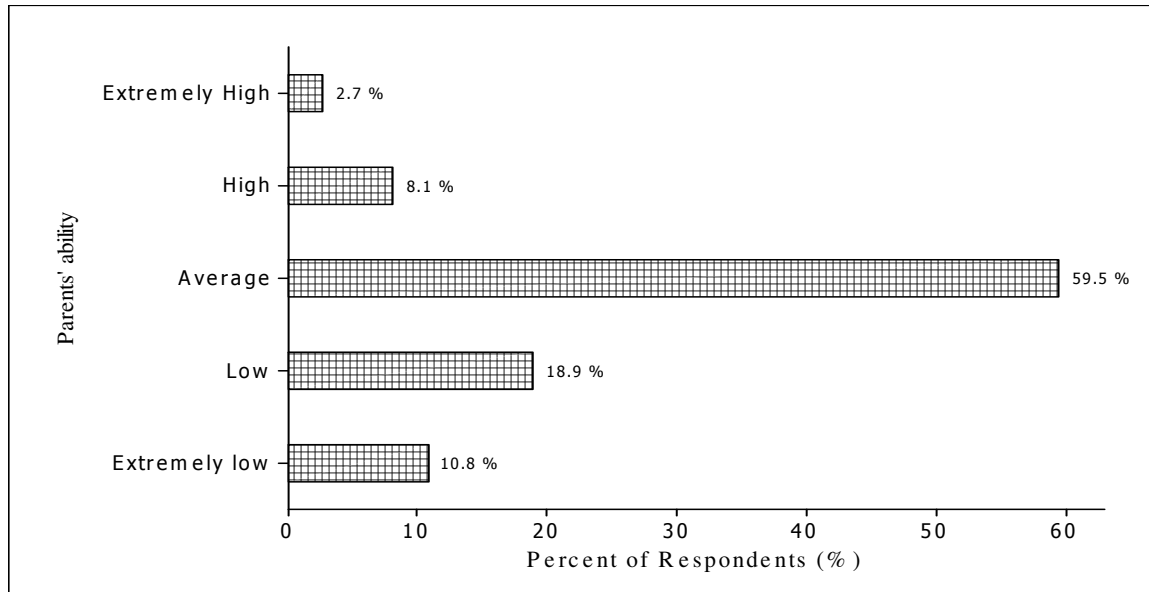


Figure 12. Teachers perceptions on parents' abilities to finance basic education

Table 7. Teachers perceptions on how family background influences school dropouts

Variable	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
i)Parents reluctant to know academic work of children	22	39.3	31	41.3	10	13.3	10	13.3	2	2.7
ii)Children withdrawn to assist in wealth generation	21	28	31	41.3	13	17.3	7	9.3	3	4
iii)Children feel they are already living comfortable life	3	4	23	30.7	11	14.7	29	38.7	9	12
iv)Inheritance from family wealth	7	9.3	13	17.3	12	16	27	36	16	21.4
v)Married off early to generate wealth (dowry)	2	2.7	16	21.3	22	29.3	30	40	5	6.7

requirements of basic education. The proportion of those who thought the families' abilities were high accounted for 10.8% as shown in figure 12. From the findings, it is clear that 70.3% teachers were of the opinion that parents had the financial ability to sustain children in school while 29.7 said parents were poor.

A majority of teachers interviewed (70.6%) thought that lack of concern from parents was a factor that influenced pupils to drop out. (16%) teachers rejected this view. Another significant portion (69.3%) of respondents was in consensus that children especially in upper primary classes were withdrawn from school by parents to assist them in wealth generation. While, (13.3%) of respondents disagreed to the perception respectively. (57.7%) of teachers however rejected the perception that children expected to inherit family wealth instead of seeking education, with 26.6% agreeing. Another 50.7%

and 46.7% also disagreed with the perception that comfort provided in homes and forcing girls to get married influenced dropout rates respectively. However, only (34.7%) and (24%) agreed with the perceptions respectively as indicated in table 7.

The study shows that, not only do children from poor background fail to complete primary education but also those from economically endowed families. The reasons for that state of affairs are two one, parents puts more emphasis on wealth generation at the expense of education as supported by 70.6% of teachers and two, children are withdrawn from school in order to either take care of homes or participate in assisting parents at work as indicated in Table 7. Vroom in his expectancy theory of motivation argues that an individual will engage in a task if he or she believes that it has a reward. Dropouts as well as parents believe that engaging in other tasks

Table 8. Teachers perceptions on existence of certain educational programs in their schools

Educational programs	Yes		No	
	F	%	F	%
1.Attending Field Trips	24	32 %	51	68 %
2.Attending symposiums	2	2.7 %	73	93.3 %
3.Participating in sports and games	72	96 %	3	4 %
4.Weekend and holiday coaching	17	22.7 %	58	77.3 %
5.Taking class exams	74	98.7 %	1	1.3 %
6.Taking zonal exams	74	98.7 %	1	1.3 %
7.Taking divisional exams	73	93.3 %	2	2.7 %
8.Taking district exams	71	94.7 %	4	5.3 %
9.Holding class celebrations	15	20 %	60	80 %
10.Holding school celebrations	36	48 %	39	52 %

Table 9. Teachers' perception on who meet the cost of educational programs

Variable	F	%
1)Pupils	2	2.7
2)Parents	59	78.7
3)Churches	2	2.7
4)Teachers	15	20
5)Government	43	57.3

would generate money than in education that has no immediate returns.

In studies done by (Gok, 2004; Momanyi, 2009; Mutai, 2010.) they strongly associated poverty with school dropouts, however the current study has rejected the perception found by these studies, indicating that pupils in Trans-Nzoia East drop out of school in order to assist parents not withstanding the fact that most families are economically stable. (70.3%) teachers said most households have the ability to meet the cost of education as indicated in figure 12.

The Standard (July, 13th.2013) reported that hundreds of underage children were arrested in various bars in Nairobi. Many parents admitted to have been too busy to care for their children. Uwezo (2011) found out that in Kenya, 15/100 families had never attended school. This shows that parents have no care for their children's education and welfare. Most of the head teachers interviewed noted that pupils could have taken advantage of the carefree parents to become influential decision makers on whether to go to school or not. The head teachers cited the months of march-august when absenteeism rate rises sharply. Mr. Mwangi a head teacher (not his real name) was at pain to narrate how a bright pupil left school to go to manage the family Tractor. When he tried to pursue the pupil with an aim of making him continue with education, the pupil almost overran him with a Tractor. Therefore, this study concurs with the

literature review that children participate in wealth generation instead of attending school.

Table 8 shows teachers' responses on the availability of various educational programs in their schools. Most of the teachers 96% said their pupils used to participate in sports and games programs. Another 98.7% identified class and zonal examinations that were taken respectively. While 93.3% and 94.7% said, upper primary pupils took both divisional and district examinations respectively.

All the teachers interviewed said that all the educational programs in the Table 8 required funding and therefore they would not succeed without sufficient funds.

When asked who exactly met the costs of educational programs, 2(2.7%) thought it was the pupils themselves, 59(78.7 %) believed it was done by the parents whereas 2(2.7 %) thought it was met by churches. On the belief that teachers dug into their pockets to fund these programs, 15(20%) agreed while 43(57.3 %) were in agreement with the notion that government supports these programs entirely as shown in table 9.

Parents pay for the above educational programs as indicated by 78.7% of the sampled respondents. However, another 57.3% said government paid for it. The resultant problem was that in the event a parent failed to raise the extra-levy then his or her child risked being send away as shown in figure 13.

This inability, according to the head teachers let to

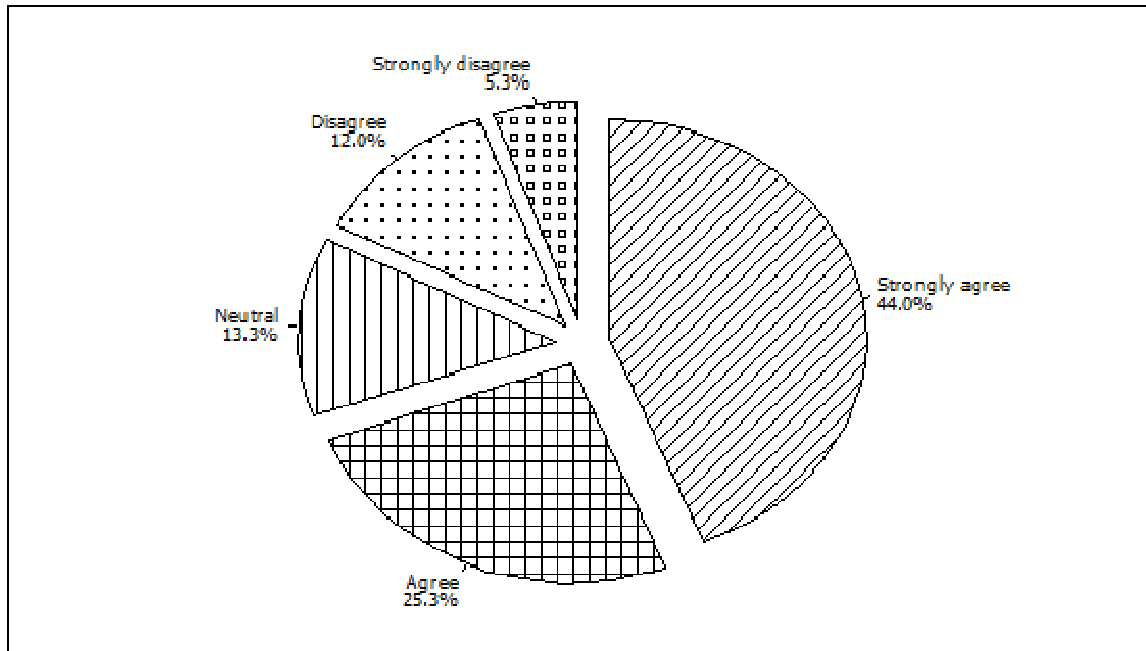


Figure 13. Teachers responses on the opinion that failure to finance educational programs leads to school dropouts

some pupils missing some of the programs due to lack of money. Pupils would be affected in academic performance and would eventually drop out of school. In fact, Joyce (not her name), a head teacher said;

“I have never had the whole class sit an exam where examination was charged. Since these exams are often used as end term or end year evaluations, some pupils drop out of school when asked to repeat a class due to lack of grades or examination marks”.

On further probe, the head teachers indicated that parents were required to meet salaries for teachers employed by Parents Teachers Association (PTA). It was established that some of the schools visited employed an average of two teachers. Motivation programmes were in many schools, in which teachers and pupils who performed well were rewarded with gifts. Parents paid for all. On examination the head teachers said classes seven and eight and more specifically class eight were given examination almost on a weekly basis. When all programmes were summed, an average sum of ksh.4000 and over was charged per pupil in classes 7, 8, and most specifically class 8. This research finding agrees with Odawo (2011) as cited by The Link (2011). Odawo found that Busia based primary schools were charging Ksh.200. per child per month. He further noted that class 8 pupil was required to pay a total of Ksh.8000. The inability to pay whether willingly or otherwise influenced the pupils' dropout rate. What was interesting was that this 'silent fees' was not receipted as one head teacher beckoned the researcher not to highlight it anywhere. He further

said the arrangement was between the school and parents only. Therefore, the finding was in agreement with the literature review.

The inability by parents to fund education had an effect on school's physical structure development. There were several schools that had problems related to poor physical structure. The researcher observed some buildings especially classrooms and toilets that were almost in a state of collapse. Many classrooms had no windows, windowpanes, and doors. Besides, the floors were not cemented making them very dusty. In one school, class 8 floor was made of stones and at the time of visit, it was wet because of overflow of rainwater. Toiletry was in a bad state as observed. In some schools, the researcher found long queues of pupils lined up in few toilets available, while in others pupils were seen helping themselves outside. The scenario becomes worse when girls help themselves behind overflowing toilets not withstanding boys' or men's presence.

When the teachers' perceptions were put on a likert scale (Figure 13), 44% of the teachers strongly agreed that failure to finance these programs would lead to school dropout, while another 25.3% agreed with the perception. Only 17.3% were of a contrary opinion while the rest (13.3%) were neutral as concerns this statement. In earlier discussion, teachers held the perception that Trans-Nzoia East had parents who were able to meet educational needs or financial obligation of their children. However aware that education is free and the

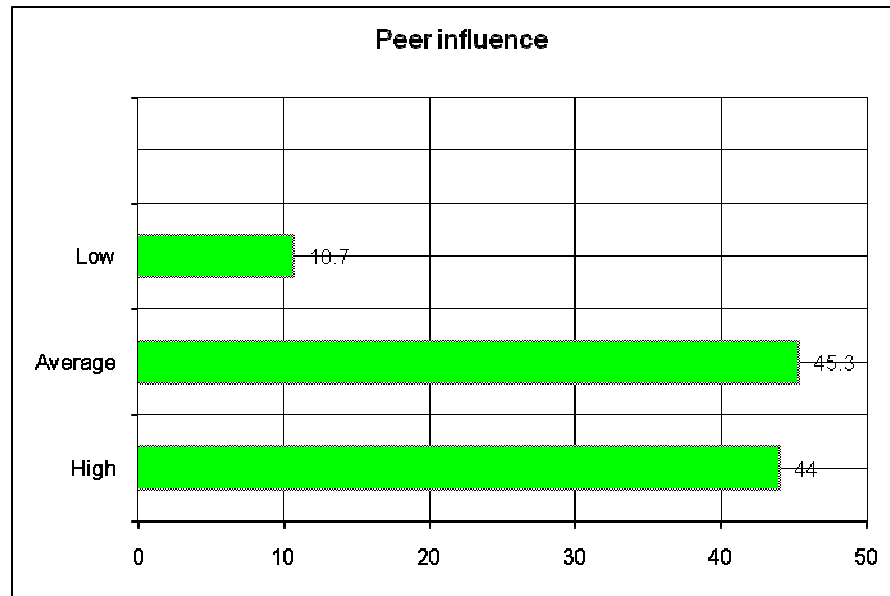


Figure 14. Peer influence on school dropouts

commitment by the government made to the people (GoK, 2004 p40);

“...the government will ensure that no potential student will be denied access to education or training for reasons of inability to afford.....develop mechanism for support to households and regions that cannot afford”.

The Sessional paper further commits to (ibid, p22) “ensuring that school facilities are gender responsive...especially in mixed schools”. Parents had abdicated their responsibility to the government and other supportive agencies that is why 69.3% of the respondents said failure to finance the educational programs had influenced the pupils to drop out of school as shown in Figure 13. Therefore, the current study agrees with the findings of Fedha (2013) that parents in Kisumu municipality were concerned with activities that helped them to raise family income as opposed to their children’s education.

Parents may be hiding under the cover of poverty not to build schools or provide necessary learning facilities and meet financial obligation according to teachers interviewed. Therefore, the current study disapproves the findings by (Ibrahim et al, 2008) that associated school dropouts with poverty among families.

Veele and Sarah (2008), argues that many students in South Africa left school because of criticism and humiliation inflicted on them by educators. To them poverty drew children to school since it acted as a source of hope and way out of poverty. Punishments given for non-payment like withholding report card and humiliation through comments negatively affected learners. Further, the issue is not about lack of affordability but the poverty

of a child in relation to others and the process through which the child is excluded from school. The challenge is to make schools more attractive and interesting (www.ipsnews.net/./poverty-no-longer-explains-school-dropout-in-argentina) accessed Nov.8th, 2013.

Peer Influence

Pupils dropped out of school because of peer influence. Teachers were of varied opinion on the extent of its influence on school dropouts. Figure 14 show that 44% of the teachers were of the opinion that the influence is high. Another proportion (45.3 %) of the respondents perceived the influence to be average but only 10.7 % perceived the influence to be low.

On examining how peer pressure influences school dropouts certain statements were made. The results of teachers’ perception on how peer pressure influences dropouts were recorded in table 10.

On the statement that pupils are lured to drop out of school by dropouts who are already successful in life. (50.7%) of the respondents agreed, on the contrary, (32%) disagreed as indicated in table 10.

Teachers were further asked on the statement that school dropouts inform pupils to get out of prison-like school environment (49.3%) of the respondents concurred while (32%) were of dissenting opinion.

On dropouts enticing those in school with gifts or attractive offers so that they stop going to school (49.8%) of the respondents agreed while (28%) differed with the statement.

On the idea that pupils drop out of school since they

Table 10. Teachers perceptions on peer pressure factors that influence school dropout

Variable	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
i) Allured by successful dropouts	13	17.3	24	32	17	22.7	18	24	3	4
ii) Pressure to get out of prison-like school	17	22.7	21	28	13	17.3	15	20	9	12
iii) To conform with dropouts	16	21.3	15	20	20	26.7	3	4	21	28
iv) Lack of hope to secure secondary education	12	16	23	30.7	17	22.7	11	14.7	12	16
v) Failure to secure employment by those who finished school	18	24	25	33.3	13	17.3	11	14.7	8	10.7

see many youths who had completed education jobless and desperate. A significant portion (57.3%) of the teachers supported while (25.3%) disagreed with the opinion.

The perception that one may not secure employment on completion of education negatively affected primary school education. Table 10 indicates that (57.3%) of the respondents concurred. It is this perception that may have led to high level of absenteeism among upper primary pupils. As earlier discussed, the head teachers said that chronic absenteeism between the months of April- August was evidence enough for dropout rates. For instance, one school registered 160 pupils in January but at the time of research in July 2013, there were only 132 pupils in class seven. This findings concur with Uwezo (2011, pg 65) which reported that Trans-Nzoia East had an attendance rate of (57.97%) on the day their research was done. However, the report continues to say that 4/10 children miss classes daily. Kiminyo et al, (1992), Murray, (1994) and Poipoi, (2011) identify lack of hope as psychological problem that manifest in different forms one of it, is low self-esteem leading to disengagement, absenteeism and aggressive behaviours. Further Cole (2002, pg 101) asserts that 'the perception that one will not join secondary school or get employment lowers the esteem and determination of a pupil'.

Dropouts had taken advantage of the tough conditions spelled out in some schools to advise those still learning to get out of prison-like conditions. The view was supported by 50.7% of the respondents. Closely related to it was the perception that pupils were enticed or influenced by certain favours to drop out an opinion that was supported by 49.3% of the respondents as indicated in table 10. To dropouts life outside school is full of freedom and fun where there are no controls or restrictions. In an interview, a head teacher said that the dropouts having been members to the school understood their peers very well and they knew whom to attack. The statement approves the earlier findings that pupils in upper classes were subjected to difficult conditions in

school that is why they drop out in order to avoid them. Murray (1994) says that adolescents are highly dependant on one another for self-esteem and companionship and decision-making. Given that comfort was no longer found in school and to make matters worse their parents were not interested in schoolwork or their welfare, pupils would have opted to drop out of school in search of a more welcoming group, which was found among the dropouts.

The expectancy theory of motivation by Vroom argues that an individual will only do a task that offers him or her emotional satisfaction. By joining colleagues who had dropped out of school the child will be looking for a more rewarding and secure environment which is not available in school.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents a summary of the findings and conclusion that were drawn from the findings. Recommendations that arise from the conclusion are provided. Suggestion for further researches is included.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Cultural practices and their influence on school drop out

The teachers were of the opinion that upper primary pupils could not communicate in English language because of the influence of mother tongue, other languages and teachers. English language being the main media of communication and national examinations are set in English except Kiswahili had forced teachers to apply several methods harsh and soft in most cases causing a lot of discomfort to pupils. Figure 4 indicates that 56% of teachers said pupils were not comfortable

with English use. The head teachers concurred with class teachers that pupils could hardly or express themselves in English. Punishments meted out to pupils whenever they failed to use English more often than not made pupils associate pains with it. Difficulties in English use and daily punishments given to pupils influenced them to drop out of school in order to avoid these painful conditions and experiences.

Teachers also claimed that pupils in upper primary classes were forced to drop out of school due to the pressure from their cultural beliefs and practices. More specifically boys after undergoing initiation rite acquire new behaviours that increase daily conflicts with teachers and school management. Table 4 indicates that boys after undergoing initiation rite they:

- i) underrate any female person whom they refer to as a 'kid' who is to be controlled, a view supported by 53.3% teachers.
- ii) tend to engage in physical fights at any little provocation going with 52% teachers who held the opinion.
- iii) often reject to be punished more so by a female teacher going by 60% of teachers who supported the opinion. An initiation rite therefore transforms pupils who were obedient to school authority to rude and disobedient individuals. For pupils who cannot withstand this they prefer to drop out of school.

Teachers pointed out that pregnancies among girls from classes six, seven and eight were very common. Figure 7 shows that 61.3% had 1-2 cases, 18.7% had 3-4 cases and 5.3% over 5 cases respectively in their classes. It also indicates that by class eight several girls would have fallen victims of teenage pregnancy. However, girls failed to seek readmission after giving birth because they were afraid of being made fun off by both teachers and peers. The unwelcoming school environment created destabilised the girls emotionally. Table 5 shows that 82% of the respondents were of the view that girls failed to seek readmission because they were afraid of humiliation and isolation they would face in school. This implies that school did not have any mechanism of protecting and incorporating girls who were victims of pregnancy.

Security factors influencing school drop outs

According to table 6 it was established that 84% teachers said pupils engage in stealing others property, 76.7% abuse others, while 74.6% engage in fighting. When schools expose pupils to insecure conditions, the most vulnerable pupils are bound to suffer. Further, figure 9 indicates that 64% teachers forced pupils to run several trips to a determined destination and another 50.7% caned in disciplined pupils. Corporal punishment was a popular method of reforming deviant pupils going with head teachers' comments and the observation made by

the researcher. Pupils in this study area have no safe place to hide or stay. Fellow pupils steal their property, abuse them, and to the extreme beat or fight them. The insecure environment in schools influences the vulnerable pupils to hate school and therefore become victims of school dropouts.

Pupils in this area walk long distances to and from school. Figure 10 indicates that a majority 61.4% of sampled teachers noted that pupils walk barefooted over than 3 kilometres to and from school daily. These long distances come with its problems such as those presented in figure 11. It shows that 73.3% teachers said pupils failed to go for lunch. 68% teachers said pupils got very tired hence; they lost strength to concentrate on class work, which affected their academic performance. 66.7% percentage teachers noted pupils failing to be punctual to first lessons and 60% teachers said pupils were rained on especially during wet season so they were bound to suffer from cold related sickness. Besides, their books got wet too. Finally, 58.7% of sampled teachers said pupils were soiled because of slippery routes. Pupils exposed to such harmful and dangerous conditions eventually loose hope in schooling consequently they drop out of school in search of a more secure places.

Family Background that influences pupil dropout

Teachers indicated that a majority of households had the ability to meet financial obligations of their children as indicated by figure 12. However, table 7 indicates that,

- i. 70.6% of respondents said parents were less concerned with their children's education because they hardly consulted teachers or paid visits to schools with a view of finding out children's progress. Hence, children take advantage of the loophole to withdraw from schools.
- ii. 69.3% teachers disclosed that parents withdrew children from schools so that they could assist in domestic work or engage in family business. Parents in this study area could have lost hope in education therefore; they concentrate more in generating and building their family wealth at the expense of education.

Table 9 shows that schools charge parents money. Over 90% of the respondents said that parents are required to pay for series of examinations pupils sit (see table 8). Head teachers said that examinations are given to standard eight pupils almost on a weekly basis. They further noted that more money was spent on PTA employed teachers. Cumulatively it was established that a pupil was supposed to pay more than Ksh.4000 per year. Aware that the government provides free education parents had decided not pay any money to school but instead withdraw their children from school. They secretly did so, to avoid a backlash from head teachers in the event they failed to raise fees, which was part of their agreement with school management.

Peer Influence on school dropout

The Teachers said that peer influence exerted a lot of pressure to upper primary pupils to drop out of school. Table 10 demonstrate that 57.3% of sampled teachers held the opinion that the high figure of the jobless school graduates had negatively influenced pupils in academic performance and school attendance. Education no longer attracted pupils because it could not propel them either to secondary school or to any job. However, 57, 3% teachers said that their colleagues who had earlier on dropped from school lured pupils. Dropouts may have cleverly used the harsh and tough conditions in schools to lure them to get out. They demonstrated to them how peaceful and relaxed the out-of-school environment provided. There being no restrictions, it attracted pupils who were in school to drop out with the main aim of enjoying the said environment.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were arrived at:

Cultural practices and their influences on pupils' dropout

According to the findings of this study, teachers were of the opinion that the emphasis on use of English language was found to be unpopular among pupils in upper classes. 56% teachers said pupils hate it (see figure 4) therefore it influenced pupils to drop out of school. Matters got worse when teachers punished whoever was found not communicating in English. In this case, English use by pupils was associated with pains.

Initiation rites were found to be a factor influencing school dropout rate. 93% teachers (see figure 5) noted a significant behaviour change among boys than it was for girls. Campaign against female circumcision seemed to have succeeded. However, the training given to boys in seclusion drastically altered their behaviour because some became more rebellious to both teachers and colleagues. Female teachers experienced the highest problems and the non-initiated boys with the initiated ones.

Teenage pregnancies were found to be on the increase. Figure 4.6 shows that 85.3% teachers said that they had cases of pregnancies in their respective classes. The teachers noted that not almost all victims of teenage pregnancy ever sought readmission to school despite the government policy allowing it. Teachers said the victims were afraid of being isolated and humiliated in the event they went back to school. Moreover, teachers did not find out the whereabouts of girls who dropped out of school as a result of pregnancy.

Security factors influencing pupils' dropout among upper primary classes

The study found that according to teachers' schools were no longer safe places for pupils. 94.7% and over 50% (see table 6 and figure 9 respectively) of teachers supported the view. Pupils were subjected to harsh punishments from teachers and prefects. Further, there were poor inter-pupil relationships. This implies that weak and the vulnerable had difficult life at school, which made them to loose hope in schooling and eventually dropped out.

Teachers said that long distances exposed pupils to several problems such as missing early morning lessons and lunch, being rained on, being soiled on slippery muddy routes and even getting tired. Pupils in these schools are exposed to a difficult life, which plays a role in influencing school drop out.

Family background and its influence on pupils' dropout

The teachers said that most parents did not like visiting schools to find out how their children were performing. Parents were in most cases engaged in money generating activities. That is why over 70% (see table 7) teachers noted minimal parental concern or participation in their children's education. The study further established that parents often withdrew their children from school in order to assist in either taking care of the home, engage in production of wealth or in business.

Schools had reintroduced fees to pupils especially for classes 7-8 with the knowledge or without knowledge of Ministry of education officials; that was the reason why pupils who failed to raise the money dropped out school. Apparently parents were aware that primary education was free and compulsory and therefore because of fear to challenge head teachers on fees payment. They alternatively engaged their children in family business that later influenced them to drop out.

Ways in which peer factors influences pupils' dropout

The teachers said that pupils who got in contact with their friends who had finished school but had not secured any employment or joined secondary school, acted as a negative motivator. Education was therefore perceived to be useless. Besides, as already established most schools subjected pupils to inhuman treatment given that caning was perceived to be normal by teachers. Girls who got pregnant never sought readmission after giving birth. However, the dropouts had taken advantage of tough conditions in school to advice those who were in school to drop out so that they too could enjoy freedom from ill-

treatment from both teachers and colleagues.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. a) There is need for primary schools to admit to standard one pupils who had graduated in ECDE School. Further, schools can introduce the policy of speaking in English gradually especially for those fresh in upper primary. Punishment if mandatory to give, it should be mild.

b). On initiation rites there is need to sensitise parents and boys on harmful traditional practices. The church or religious organisations should encourage parents to embrace modern ways of initiating boys such as the use of hospitals. Further, the church can take over the role of guiding candidates during seclusion. Parents can attend all or some sessions of guiding initiates in seclusion to ensure that good morals are inculcated into the boys. Finally, initiation rites can be delayed until the boys finish primary education. This would ensure that they are able to complete schooling.

c). To ensure that more girls access education regardless of cultural practices related to pregnancy, vigorous campaigns against practices that deny them education can be launched by stakeholders. Emphasis should be on strengthening re-entry to school of teenage mother after weaning off their babies. There is also the need to expand the current 'Nyumba Kumi' initiative (Ten households) government policy to include follow-ups on education of children. Moreover, teachers should take the responsibility of tracing the whereabouts of victims of pregnancy. This would enhance confidence in girls and help them feel encouraged to return to school. However, there is need to sensitise the pupils to seek guidance and counselling services from teachers in case in a dilemma.

2. Teachers should device ways of discouraging bullying through guiding and counselling as well as engaging pupils in sports or clubs. Further, stakeholders should enhance awareness on child rights and consequences of its violation.

3. Schools with vast and even those with little land can reduce its wastage by engaging in agro-based business for instance greenhouse. This would enable schools produce enough food for pupils and teachers as well as surplus for sale. Moreover, more primary schools should be opened up in order to cater for long distances.

4. Pupils should be made aware of the importance of achieving full primary education. Village polytechnic should be increased in order to provide technical education to dropouts.

Suggestions for further research

This study recommends the following studies:

1. A research be carried out on African initiation rites in order to establish how it affects boys' education.
2. A similar research be carried out on lower primary classes in order to assess the magnitude of dropout rate among primary school pupils.
3. A study be carried out on the implementation of ECDE curriculum in order to determine its relevance in preparing children for primary school education.

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